

HUMILIATION
with HONOR

VERA BRITTAIN

FELLOWSHIP PUBLICATIONS







HUMILIATION WITH HONOR

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VERA BRITTAİN

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By the same Author

ENGLAND'S HOUR

TESTAMENT OF FRIENDSHIP

THRICE A STRANGER

HONORABLE ESTATE

POEMS OF THE WAR AND AFTER

TESTAMENT OF YOUTH

HALCYON, OR THE FUTURE OF MONOGAMY

WOMEN'S WORK IN MODERN ENGLAND

NOT WITHOUT HONOR

THE DARK TIDE

VERSES OF A V.A.D.

HUMILIATION WITH HONOR

by

VERA BRITTAIN

"It is only the experience of historical failure itself that has proved fruitful, in the sense that the consciousness of humanity has thereby been increased."

NICOLAS BERDYAEV.

The Meaning of History.

FELLOWSHIP PUBLICATIONS

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TO THE
VICTIMS OF POWER

"Be not ashamed, my brothers, to stand before the proud and the
powerful

With your white robe of simpleness.

Let your crown be of humility, your freedom the freedom of the soul;

Build God's throne daily upon the ample bareness of your poverty,

And know that which is huge is not great and pride is not everlasting."

Rabindranath Tagore: *The Sunset of the Century* (from *Nationalism*).

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FOREWORD

ONE OF THE MOST significant and moving records of personal experience that came out of the First World War was Vera Brittain's book, *The Testament of Youth*. Ever since its publication its author has had a host of friends in the United States, to whom—and to others like them—this present volume should bring a welcome extension of acquaintance with her deep convictions about war.

This book, too, is intimate and personal, made up of letters written by Vera Brittain in England to her fifteen-year-old son in the United States, explaining to him the meaning of her pacifism. From beginning to end the book holds attention, if only because the author has chosen as her medium not argumentative discourse, but simple, direct, personal testimony—a mother writing to her son about some of the deepest convictions of her life.

Because those convictions are what they are, and because the present situation is what it is, the readers of this book are likely, for the most part, to be pacifists. This is a pity, for even though a non-pacifist should disagree with most of it, this little volume would make healthy reading for him. War can be viewed in two ways—first, as the instrument we use to overthrow an enemy; second, as itself the enemy that most needs to be overthrown. Intelligent non-pacifists, with a civilized, international outlook, would say that both these points of view are necessary, but in the fury of war and under the duress of its necessities the second often sinks out of sight, and multitudes forget it. This book, once read, makes it impossible to forget it. The vast, unheralded, submerged meanings of war to the plain people of the world here find a voice that, once heard, haunts memory and conscience.

I do not see how anyone can read this book without being moved to deeper levels of thought and determination. The author commends her convictions to our respect, as to her son's,

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by her unfailing good will, her sympathetic understanding of those who differ with her, her candid criticism of pacifism's mistaken forms, by the profoundly Christian bases of her thought, her poised and balanced endeavor to face the realistic facts, and the obvious sincerity of her own conscientious stand.

I, for one, lay the book down feeling sure that such people as Vera Brittain are needed in this world.

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

PROLOGUE

MY DEAR SON,—In one of R.'s recent letters, she told me that you and S. had been talking to her about the war and my attitude toward it. S., she said, had championed, with the passionate loyalty so characteristic of her, the ideas of the minority to which I belong. But you had questioned and criticized.

Let me say at once that I find it both right and natural that S. should applaud and you should criticize. Being nearly three years your junior, she still is younger than you were when you both went to America. At that time, you had not yourself reached the age of philosophic interrogation. But you have grown up so quickly in the past two years that your questions are now inevitable.

I need hardly say that I do not expect you, at fifteen, to endorse any beliefs that I hold just because they are mine. No one has much value as a member of a minority unless he has once thought with the majority, and shared the position of those who now call him a "fanatic" or a "crank." What matters most at your age is that you should think for yourself.

But it is also important that you should understand the thinking of others. Your criticism will not be authentic if it is directed against fake images and imaginary assumptions, and you will find that most war-time newspapers and magazines will tend to create those images and to make those assumptions. You must have a clear idea of what some of us really think about the world we are now living in, before you condemn us for our point of view and the penalties which it brings. Above all, I want you to realize that even humiliation is not dishonorable when it is voluntarily accepted and endured without bitterness for the sake of convictions which those who hold them believe to be true.

Pacifism is nothing other than a belief in the ultimate transcendence of love over power. This belief comes from an

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inward assurance. It is untouched by logic and beyond argument—though there are many arguments both for and against it. And each person's assurance is individual; his inspiration cannot arise from another's reasons, nor can its authority be quenched by another's skepticism.

In my next few letters I shall try to explain what I mean by these assertions. My letters will not be designed to solicit your agreement. Their purpose is only to discuss a minority problem made acute by war, and to illustrate a point of view which is shared by many people in addition to

YOUR MOTHER.

1. THE WHEELS OF JUGGERNAUT

I do not think I have ever told you just when and how those beliefs which you question began.

Their origin lies far back in the last war, which ended nine years before you were born. For two months of that war, during 1917, I was nursing wounded German prisoners in a camp in France.

Before that, I had felt much the same about Germans as most people feel today. Though I couldn't, even then, swallow quite all the propaganda that I read, I took for granted, like other young people of my generation, that the government was always right, and that it was our duty to kill Germans because they said so.

Those two months started me thinking for myself in much the same way as you are thinking now. Before they were over, they had taught me that the qualities common to all human beings, of whatever race or country, far exceed the national and political differences which sometimes divide them.

That discovery was one of those profound spiritual experiences which make all controversial argument seem trivial and irrelevant. Even after twenty-five years I have still to learn its full implications, though it made me resolve to devote my life to examining the causes of war and doing what I could to prevent another. This endeavor has failed for the time being; but I should be false to myself, and you, and everything which matters to us both, if I were to deny today what I learned from that spiritual experience.

Some of us who remember the First World War recall their oppressive consciousness of a vast machine gradually taking control of the men who made it. The politicians of the Great Powers had set the wheels of Juggernaut in motion, but almost immediately the chariot seemed to take its own direction, and to roll over humanity at its self-chosen pace.

Today, in a second and still more destructive war, the same thing is happening all over again and on an even larger scale.

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Because they proved incapable of learning the lessons of history, some of the blind leaders who thought that they could control the machine are already numbered amongst its victims. The speed of the crushing wheels which they started is carrying us to the end of that epoch which began four centuries ago with the Renaissance and the Reformation.

I expect you often see the American news magazine, *Time*. At the beginning of 1942* there was a sentence in it which has stayed in my mind: "In 1941, over the world's measureless acres of misery, the war lay like a burden too great to be carried, too great to be thrown off." That sentence referred to the period before Pearl Harbor. In 1942 the burden grew heavier, and the acres of misery multiplied.

If you turn your eyes to the world as a whole from the land of rich resources where you are now a guest, you will see a picture of suffering probably unparalleled in history. The worst peace conceivable would not have produced a tenth of it.† In spite of its darkness this picture contains its elements of hope, but I shall write of these in later letters. Today I want you to realize the measure of unnecessary pain which has come to mankind through a war that could have been prevented on a score of occasions if those in authority had really intended to do good instead of evil. This deliberate choice of the worse way rather than the better was typical of the nations which won the last war, long before it began again to be typical of Germany, or of Japan.

The peoples who are suffering today still have more reasons for liking than for detesting one another, just as the British Tommies and the German prisoners found that they had in

* January 5, 1942.

† Nothing illustrates this fact more strikingly than the fate of the Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. The World Jewish Congress recently stated (*Evening Standard*, August 6, 1942) that of the seven million Jews who normally live in these territories, one million have been done to death. Yet according to a provisional census taken in May, 1939, and quoted by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the total number of Jews in the pre-war Reich was no more than 339,892. This figure included Austria and Sudetenland, but not Danzig and Memel.

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1917. But their rulers, each of whom is playing his own game of power politics and blaming the ensuing catastrophes upon the others, do their best to prevent them from discovering the true extent of their affinity. By emphasizing the latent antagonisms which can divide communities, and attributing to all their opponents whole categories of qualities which only a few of them possess, they persuade ordinary men and women to hate, despise, and kill others of their kind with whom they have no quarrel.

Never, within so short a period, have great populations all over the world been tortured in such a variety of ways both mental and physical. We know this to be happening, though one of the unique features of this war is that we seldom receive any trustworthy details. The shapes which emerge from the kaleidoscope of pain are dim and confused. Like mist concealing the outlines of mountain summits, the fog of propaganda blankets the sharp edges of truth.

Here in Europe, we have seen the political achievements of millennia fall into dissolution. In Asia, the British and Dutch Empires, built through centuries by the toil of millions, disintegrated in three months. Every morning we in England and you in America read in our newspapers of events comparable to the clash of planets, of historic changes greater than those which caused the fall of the Roman Empire. But have you ever noticed how little we learn of the day-by-day incidents which give human meaning to these revolutionary events? What actually lies behind the reassuring platitudes of the radio or between the lines of the press reports, so carefully drawn up in words designed to neutralize tension and reduce earth-shaking cataclysms to the comfortable proportions of normality?

We do not know. Because the British, like the Americans, are a humane people, the barrier of censorship has to be imposed and the news sifted all the more carefully. We recoil from the thought that, by blockading the Continent, a government which we elected is conniving at the starvation of millions.

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So we must not be permitted to picture the poor homes and ill-equipped, overcrowded hospitals in which Greek and Belgian children are dying from famine or the diseases which it brings. Nor must we be reminded of the aged and the invalids who shuddered through the last bitter winter without food, heat, or warm clothing.

The imagination of kindly men and women is protected against these facts because, if they were aware of what is really happening behind the drawn curtains, their decency would revolt. If they could see starvation, disease, and death actually at work, they might begin to ask, on an embarrassingly large instead of a tiny scale, whether any victory was worth having which involved the continuation of such methods. They might also remember that the makers of international law, now partially repudiated by both sets of combatants, based their rules upon the doctrine that it is better to suffer disadvantage in war than to descend to conduct so barbarous that it strips the cause in whose name it is committed of even the bare pretense of morality.

When I recollect walking through the snowy streets of Calais on the first stage of a roundabout journey to the United States in January, 1940, it is strange to think that the coast of France might be as distant as mute Batavia for all that we can now learn of the daily lives of its inhabitants. You and I cannot even guess what unexpected friendships may be growing up between human creatures drawn together by their dire need of comradeship and comfort. A million examples may exist of mercy, forgiveness, and cooperation, but they pass unrecorded. Because the curtain is seldom lifted on anything but hatred and murder, we receive from Europe and Asia a dark impression of pain unrelieved by pity.

You remember the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, those gaunt specters carrying tragedy through the world? We might well invent a Fifth, and call his name Silence. Today silence is the symbol of terror and bereavement, of lifelong speculation

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following months of suspense. A ship sails—destroyer, merchantman, trawler, or submarine. It never reaches its destination. Where is it? Silence. A bomber goes out on a night flight or a daylight sweep, and “fails to return.” What has happened to the pilot—to my son, my husband, my brother? Silence. A small garrison holding an island fortress is beleaguered and attacked till communications cease. Why did they cease? Silence.

Perhaps we inquire what befell the civilians in other fallen cities and islands. You will remember that, for one moment, a searchlight played vividly upon a corner of Hong Kong. We averted our eyes, but ask the more urgently: What happened in Wake, in Guam, in Manila, in Penang,* in Singapore, in Java, in Tobruk, in Rostov? How did Mandalay appear when the Japanese had finished with it? What has occurred in Burma since it vanished from the news? Silence. In a world where the means of communication are swifter and more numerous than was even conceivable to the imagination of our grandparents, Silence has become the twin brother of Giant Despair.

Such is civilization in the fifteenth year of your too eventful life. If you mean to leave it better than you find it, you and your generation will have plenty to do. It will be worth doing. But it will not be easy for the artist into which you are developing. An artist is always a strong individualist, and the tendency of the present age is to repress the individual and impose conformity.

Next week I will tell you what I mean by this, and how it is done.

* In a letter to *The Times* (London) of August 14, 1942, on “Colonial War Damage,” Mr. L. D. Gammans, M.P., has stated: “There will be damage to private property as well. Thousands of houses will have been destroyed in actual combat or by bombs. Penang, for example, is little more than a shambles. . . . The houses and shops are almost entirely Asiatic-owned, and it is not always realized that over 50 per cent of the rubber and 40 per cent of the tin mines are owned and operated by Asiatics.” Mr. Gammans’ letter was written to inquire who is going to pay for all this damage.

2. THE DECLINE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

IN my last letter I tried to give you a general picture of the age of spiritual retrogression in which we live. Do not accuse me of pessimism because the picture was dark. I am so far from being a pessimist that even two wars have not impaired my faith in humanity and its future, though you are now more likely than myself to see the civilized society of which I have dreamed.

But wishful thinking and lack of realism are the bane of our day. It is natural that the inheritors of a terrible epoch should indulge in mental escapism, and should be encouraged in this by those who have led them to catastrophe. There is no antidote to discontent so effective as an easy sentimental optimism. But this has nothing in common with faith and courage, which spring from a knowledge and acceptance of the truth. You remember the words of Jesus to his disciples: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." In *De Imitatione Christi*, Thomas à Kempis carried this promise to its next logical stage: "If the truth shall have made thee free, thou shalt not care for the vain words of men."

The vainest words are those which blunt the edge of our courage by depicting our circumstances as better than they are. We can save ourselves only if we honestly recognize the extent to which retrogression has begun, combat its manifestations with all our strength, and use whatever creative force we possess to reverse certain existing social tendencies.

If we fail in this, the human race may not recapture for centuries even the partial allegiance to spiritual values which has been characteristic of the more civilized in both East and West. I believe that our success depends largely upon our ability to reassert and recover the value of the individual as such.

When you study the history of civilization, you will find that it is the story of the individual's emergence from the

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control of powers hostile to his development: forces of nature, of superstition, of ignorance, of powerful tyrants, and the all-powerful state. Christianity itself is based upon respect for the individual as the possessor of an immortal soul more valuable, in the eyes of God, than the material ambitions of competitive governments. Even politicians, whose vested interests are essentially anti-Christian, occasionally recognize this paramount claim.

I recall, for instance, a statement made during the last war* by Lord Hugh Cecil to the House of Commons, which does not often get the opportunity of hearing declarations of religious faith by its Members. He was speaking against an amendment to the Reform Bill, disfranchising conscientious objectors, and this is what he said:

"I am most anxious that this country should maintain the proposition that there is a higher law, and that we will not listen to the doctrine that the state's interest is to be supreme. . . . Belief in the state cannot help us to bear the sufferings or control the passions of the war. It is a barren faith, as well as a degrading faith. It does but encumber us and shut us out from that higher world in which we ought to live."

But today, in another war, when the need to control passions and bear suffering is even greater, Christianity itself is in retreat. And with it has declined, during the past two decades, the value of its essential unit, the individual soul. A few months ago I read a newspaper article† in which the writer quoted some significant words used by Joseph C. Harsch, formerly the Berlin correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor*:

"The force which defeats Germany must also possess one essential of the German military machine. It must be backed, as is Germany's, by a government which can exact sacrifices from the civilian mass behind the army beyond anything America or Britain has ever faced."

Note that phrase "civilian mass." It implies a bulk population without individual hopes, fears, choices, affections, or any

* November 21, 1917.

† By Ronald Hyde in the *Evening Standard*, March 6, 1942.

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rights but the right to make more and more sacrifices of everything that renders life worthy to be lived.

Today, across the five continents and the seven seas, you find large sections of that bulk population being subjected to forms of persecution, oppression, victimization, and constraint which were used in the period between the World Wars by the Russian and German totalitarian governments, but which the unleashing of war-time passions has multiplied and extended a hundredfold. These forms of persecution range from the state control of individual travel, to the compulsory emigration of entire populations; from the exercise of autocratic powers to detain "suspects" without trial in prisons and concentration camps, to the imposition of military and industrial conscription; from the seizure or regulation of private funds, to arbitrary restrictions on speech and writing. The one extreme passes easily into a policy of murder which views with indifference the death of the body; the other involves a total disregard of the frustration and atrophy of the mind.

Perhaps you have noticed that, since the war began, a new kind of standard vocabulary has been developed which seems to be designed to conceal the individual suffering caused both by war-time adversities and by the official use of humiliation as a weapon. I wonder if America too has begun to use this vocabulary since she came into the war. One form which it takes in our own country is the multiplication of categories which blunt the perception of personal disaster by means of a neutral-tinted, collective impersonality.

With the help of this convenient verbal system, the wounded and dying are transformed into "casualties," while the small householders who lose the shelter and savings of a lifetime in an air raid become "the homeless." Those hunted individuals who flee their countries seem somehow less desperate when they are described as "refugees." The mothers and children who escaped under bombs from Singapore lost much of their pathos as soon as they were included in that familiar

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category of waifs and strays, the "evacuees." When a fight against overwhelming odds means a heavy sacrifice of personnel for the R.A.F., we learn to accommodate ourselves to the loss of "42 machines." If the sacrifice is exacted from the enemy, our imaginations are helpfully soothed by the use of sport metaphors. The crashing airplane whose flames consume its living cargo of human flesh becomes part of a "score" or a "bag."

You can see how important it is for the makers of war that men and women should guard themselves, or be guarded, against the sensitive response of their own humanity to the humanity of others. Usually they take to the process of adaptation readily enough. It is only when they have had some unforeseen and unfamiliar experience, like mine with the German prisoners in France, that they are startled out of acquiescence into realization.

In case adjustment should prove unexpectedly difficult, the standard vocabulary has a useful selection of disparaging words to assist the pupil. The best examples are usually to be found in the Sunday press, where they are perhaps introduced with the idea of assuaging any misgivings which might have been aroused by the reading of Epistle and Gospel at morning prayer. In the pages of these newspapers, the advocates of mercy, even to our starving ex-allies, become "sentimentalists," while those who stop short of hatred and murder are described as "squeamish." As for our opponents, they never state a case or make a protest; they always "scream" or "bellow." People who retain sufficient detachment to distinguish between the Nazi leaders and such Germans as the Bishop of Muenster and the pastors of the Confessional Church, are dismissed as "mushy." The editor of a provincial newspaper* once derided me as "mealy-mouthed," because, in the hope of tempering the passions roused by an acrimonious local correspondence, I had endeavored to make a balanced and unprovocative statement

* The *Doncaster Chronicle*.

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of the pacifist position. In his view, its presentation should have had more "bite" and "punch"!

These nouns and adjectives are emotional words, carefully chosen by journalists who are experts in verbal effects. I need hardly remind you that the prostitution of our more rational qualities is not achieved by calling them contemptuous names. What is prostituted is the mind of the person who confers those names or accepts them.

If you do not keep your intelligence perpetually wide awake, you will find these repeated suggestions beginning to affect your judgment in spite of yourself. The one thing that war propaganda avoids is the direct honesty of a recognizable challenge. So much of it is done by disparaging innuendoes that when you begin to feel passionate and excited, you can hardly ever recall what it was that first put your reason to sleep and roused your emotions.

I believe that the irrational state of mind created by this type of verbal propaganda is as great a danger to our nation, and its chances of winning what most people believe it to be fighting for, as Hitlerism itself. In the Nazis and the Japanese we recognize cruelty when we see it, yet that same cruelty is being created, unperceived, amongst ourselves by our constant denunciation of the very qualities—chivalry, compassion, tolerance, kindness—for the absence of which we condemn our enemies. The quality now officially glorified is "toughness"—a dangerous characteristic for a nation to cultivate. "Toughness" may be only the younger brother of ruthlessness, but it has a habit of growing up.

By reading simply the official information which appears in the press, you cannot help but realize that suffering is now so widespread that the disregard of it has become a policy. Even the official lists of casualties, still printed on the less conspicuous pages of British newspapers, have disappeared in many countries. Some time ago I read a dispatch sent in by

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the Lisbon correspondent of *The Times*, describing a disaster which overtook the Spanish "Blue Division" supporting the Axis on the Russian front. "Care has been taken in Spain not to publish the casualty lists," he wrote. "Even relatives of the dead are not informed until many weeks have passed, when a pathetic bundle of clothes arrives by post."

The Spanish people are not alone in being deprived of the human privilege of mourning their sons. In our own democratic country, as for many years in the totalitarian states, mothers, wives, fathers, and brothers must "take it" as unobtrusively as possible. The child who was the joy of a home may be crushed to death in an air raid; the boy whose promise had been his parents' inspiration may disappear in a futile attack on an invulnerable objective by an antiquated airplane. But the bereaved must not complain for fear of diminishing "morale."

The whole tendency of modern war propaganda is to persuade the public that "morale" is a synonym for morality. Actually the two are far from identical. "Morality" signifies the social interpretation of the highest ethical values; "morale" is a false god in whose name the warring peoples of the earth risk the loss of their own humanity. Yet the very attempt, universally made, to achieve the uncomplaining endurance of the intolerable, confers upon these peoples common qualities and mutual interests which cast a revealing light upon the dressed-up grievances of political leaders the moment that it is possible for the peoples to get together and discuss them frankly. If men and women remained constantly aware of the humanity in themselves and their counterparts, no war would last for an hour. One of our strongest weapons in the war against war—which mankind must win or be annihilated—is the recovery of that human awareness against which all war propaganda is directed.

Fortunately the individual, though often unconsciously, is on the side of humanity. However ruthlessly he may be or-

ganized, repressed, or ignored, he continues to think, feel, and function as a person. If wounded, he still bleeds; if bereft, he still mourns. He has his life to order and his decisions to make, not less but more because his epoch is suffering from an epidemic of suicide.

Last year I read the following in the correspondence columns of the *Daily Herald**:

"Does this fight for freedom include personal feelings? If so, how is this for an example? My wife's sister has a little girl of six years who has just recovered from a serious operation and illness. The mother's pent-up emotions and worry have resulted in her going down with a bang, which has put her in hospital. Her little girl is left fretting at home with her father. The father (warden since the outbreak of war, who has done a good bit of Blitz work in Islington, where he lives) suddenly becomes de-reserved, gets his calling-up papers, and has to go, after trying to get extension of time. He has a shop—just a small business, newspapers and sweets—and he is not allowed time to do anything about this, his wife, or his child."

I am sure you will agree that the officials in charge of this man's case needed an elementary lesson in psychology. Repressed suffering and ignored anxiety are disruptive forces. They cannot be repressed and ignored forever—and the longer repression continues, the more dangerous its potential explosiveness becomes.

You have probably heard the *cliché* which affirms that suffering ennobles individual character. This is often true—at any rate of the finest people—in the perspective of a lifetime, when the memories of past pain confer a compassionate wisdom. But it is seldom true when the suffering occurs. Only saints are capable of early redemption by its means. Amongst the majority, it is apt to crush the weak and embitter the strong. Immediate reactions to it so often take the form of resentment, intolerance, and exasperation, that the sufferer tends to antagonize his friends at the moment when his need

* January 24, 1942.

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of them is greatest. Unless he possesses a power of understanding which is given to few, he is likely to provoke in them the cruel but spontaneous human impulse to belabor the person who is "down," and thereby to increase his own state of misery.

There is no type of suffering of which this is truer than shame. Suffering takes many forms, but humiliation is characteristic of all but the noblest kinds. If ever you are humiliated by something, or somebody, look into your own heart. You will realize then that the person who points out your faults to you in bitter words—faults, perhaps, which you are slowly perceiving for yourself—is not really doing you, or anybody else, a service. Candor, so-called, is seldom the friend of charity or pity.

Thanks to its inhumanity, its disregard of the individual, and the extremity of its policies, modern war causes humiliation on a world-wide scale. The only type of extensive degradation which it temporarily reduces is unemployment. In the place of those whom it rescues from this form of suffering, it creates a number of new and growing categories. These include the victims of racial antagonism, prisoners and internees, refugees and compulsory emigrants, evacuees, the sick, the famished, "suspect" aliens, conscientious objectors and the pacifist minority to which they belong.

This minority, whose attitude you question, is probably doing as much to defend the power and value of the individual against the repressive tendencies of a totalitarian age, as any other group in Britain or America. Its members have also had reason to consider the now universal problem of suffering and humiliation. But of this I shall write more in a later letter.* In my next I will tell you something about the men and women who are trying to persuade their contemporaries to renounce war, just as John Brown and his followers once persuaded them to abandon slavery.

* See Letter 4.

3. NUMBERED WITH THE TRANSGRESSORS

WHEN a war is in progress, the minorities who resist it can hardly expect to enjoy themselves. Being foremost among the opponents of power politics, they become inevitably its victims. They are, in fact, fortunate if they escape with their necks.

We do not know but can guess the fate of any person who takes a minority position—such, for instance, as Tolstoy's—in Russia today. His situation would be much the same in Germany or Italy, though most people are unaware that the small Quaker groups in Germany have been allowed to continue under the Nazi regime, owing to German gratitude for the relief work done by the Society of Friends in Central Europe after the last war. On the European continent, the strongest anti-war minorities are probably those in Denmark, Sweden, and Finland. But in one country or another, the fortunes of pacifists in war time are likely to run the whole gamut of humiliation, from death at the hands of a firing squad to ostracism and misrepresentation by their former friends.

Here in Britain, as in the United States, war resistance was first organized between 1914 and 1918. I had no contact with pacifism then, and hardly knew that it existed. If I had known, I should probably have disapproved. There seemed at that time to be no general realization as there is today—though most people refuse to admit it—that men if they choose can end war by the exercise of their wills. Rather it was regarded as an act of God in one of his bad moods.

The reason was that for exactly a century no important war had touched everyday life in this country. After the Napoleonic Wars ended in 1815, Europe had peace until the Crimean War forty years later. This affected England very little, except for the work of Florence Nightingale and her subsequent foundation of modern nursing. Nothing happened

which could be compared with the American Civil War and its effect on homes and families. During the Boer War—another far-off campaign—a small “pro-Boer” party emerged, but the mass of the people hardly realized its existence. Apart from the teaching of the Quakers, the pacifist movement in Britain began when the No-Conscription Fellowship was formed in November, 1914.

The total membership of this body was quite small. It included about 16,000 conscientious objectors; and of these rather more than 6,000 were arrested during the war. You probably wonder why these men objected to fighting, and why anyone joined a society which brought together thousands of men and women whose views were as varied as their incomes and occupations. It is difficult to define the common factor that united them, but at bottom it was probably the same strong sense of human kinship which came to me through a different experience.

These people refused to kill, or to sanction killing, because to them human life was sacred, and far more important than the conflicting interests of governments. They had, of course, other beliefs, which sprang from this fundamental one. Many of the opinions which they came to hold by the time that the war was over were the result of their resistance rather than its cause.

For many reasons the organization of this group of pacifists was a revolutionary event, and they incurred the unpopularity of most pioneers. A number of conscientious objectors were roughly treated by military tribunals. Some were secretly shipped to France and thirty of them condemned to death, though the sentences were later commuted. Other pacifists who were above military age suffered penalties, too. The most famous of these was Bertrand Russell. Because of his opinions, and the way in which he publicized them, he was deprived of his lectureship at Cambridge, refused an exit permit to deliver a series of mathematical lectures at Harvard, and for-

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bidden to give addresses in English towns within "prohibited" areas.

Most of those early conscientious objectors were very young; their average age was only twenty-one. Of course they were called "conchies," "shirkers," and a dozen other uncomplimentary epithets, but by resisting persecution and threats of capital punishment, most of them managed to win respect from their contemporaries in the army. There is not as much difference between the outlook of a soldier and that of a conscientious objector as you might suppose. The more thoughtful and intelligent amongst both groups have similar ideas of the ends they want to achieve; what they differ about is how to achieve them.

You may think it a paradox to say that one man who fights and another who refuses to fight have the same purpose in mind; but it is often true. It means that the soldier and the conscientious objector have far more in common than either has with the comfortable type of civilian who incurs no criticism, runs no risk, and makes no sacrifices worth mentioning. I shall probably have more to say on this subject in a later letter.*

When the last war ended the No-Conscription Fellowship had fulfilled its purpose, so it was wound up at a "Concluding Convention" in November, 1919. The address on that occasion was given by its President, Clifford Allen, afterwards Lord Allen of Hurtwood. This is what he said about the pacifist movement:

"We believed it to be our duty as a minority still to maintain our position and to preach the gospel of peace in season and out of season. Such a minority will constantly fail; it will be constantly overwhelmed by the tide of warlike passion, but it must stand apart, not idly, but seeking peace. It is clear that such action must be unpopular, and not the cleverest tactician among us can make it acceptable to public opinion in time of war; but as the ages go by that minority

* See Letter 5.

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will increase, and we must hope that each war will produce a larger and larger number of people in all lands who will desire to create the machinery of peace."

Clifford Allen did not live to see the Second World War, but his hope for an increase in the minority which he helped to organize has been fulfilled. Up to September 6, 1941, 62,099 men had declared themselves to be conscientious objectors. "Total war" has also brought a problem which Lord Allen did not foresee, for thanks to the conscription of women we now have women C.O.s as well as men. A number of these already have been registered by the Tribunals.

These conscientious objectors represent only one part of British pacifism; they are the section which happens to be of military age. Behind them stands a growing body of public opinion which is not easy to estimate or locate. Some who secretly agree with the pacifists are afraid to say so, because in totalitarian warfare the power of even a democratic state to punish and penalize "dissenters" is overwhelming. You know already that though British pacifists have not been invited to sacrifice their necks, they arouse considerable hostility and incur many disadvantages.

On November 25, 1941, Dr. Alfred Salter, M.P. for Bermondsey, made a speech in Parliament which has since been published under the title *Testimony to the Commons*. In this speech he stated that about two million people—that is, one in every twenty of our population—shared the views that he expressed. By no means all these pacifists or near-pacifists belong to societies. But the Central Board for Conscientious Objectors has seventeen so-called "constituent bodies," whereas its predecessor, the No-Conscription Fellowship, had only three.

In the present war the men and women who have become war resisters and joined pacifist organizations are probably more conscious of their motives than their predecessors in 1914. That does not mean that their reasons are identical. Some have

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joined from religious, some from political motives; others—probably the majority—from a combination of the two. Quite a number reached their beliefs through suffering and conflict after fighting in the last war. A few, like myself, were brought by their service to prisoners and the wounded to realize the unifying quality of the needs and emotions which humanity shares.

Before I go on to explain these beliefs in greater detail, I want you to understand that it is war itself which has drawn so rigid a line between pacifists and the many other "men of good will" who do not fully share their convictions but have a great deal in common with their outlook.

During the two decades between the wars, the peace movement in Britain and the United States was not arbitrarily divided into "pacifists" and "non-pacifists." For years many people who are now pacifists supported, as I did, the League of Nations and "collective security." Although they regarded the sanctions clauses of the Covenant as mistaken, they felt that the League was the the best existing instrument for the organization of peace. At the famous Oxford debate in 1933 on the motion that "This House will not fight for King and Country," its supporters included believers in economic sanctions and advocates of an international police force. The proposer of the motion, Dr. C. E. M. Joad, himself abandoned pacifism in 1939.

It is only within recent memory that the League of Nations, discredited by its failure to prevent wars in Manchuria, Abyssinia, and Spain, degenerated into a mere instrument of French policy for preserving the *status quo* set up at Versailles. After the League had lost its authority, "collective security" began to mean, in the words of Canon H. R. L. Sheppard, that "if war came, everybody would be in it."

When it became evident that international relations were likely to become much worse before they would get better, the pacifists within the peace movement had to choose between

a new refusal to compromise, and the illogical position of supporting the "fight to a finish" which they believed to be the last and worst stage of a series of disastrous government policies whose successive steps they had consistently opposed. I remember some weeks of mental anguish during 1936, when I went about the country making speeches in support of the League of Nations largely in order to test my own allegiance. This experience finally showed me that I agreed less with the position I was trying to maintain than with the convictions expressed by some of my questioners. These were mostly members of the Peace Pledge Union, which Canon Sheppard had recently founded on the basis of the pledge: "I renounce war and I will never support or sanction another." When I found that I shared their views, I had no honest alternative but to join them.

As war came nearer, the members of this and other pacifist organizations realized, from experience of war resisters between 1914 and 1918, that pacifism in war time would mean ostracism, isolation, misunderstanding, a sense of frustration, and often the loss of salaries and careers. But the great majority, especially among the rank and file, refused to buy security and approval at the cost of integrity. A few, including some of the best known, did change their minds and support the war, and were criticized, often rather bitterly, by their former colleagues for doing so.

Many of those who recanted were undoubtedly sincere in their belief that yet another war must be fought to end war, and that Christian civilization could be defended by cruelty, falsehood, vengeance, and other methods which Christ himself repudiated. The difficulty of their critics arose from the fact that it is extremely easy to rationalize oneself into supporting a war, especially if you have a dignified reputation or hold a key position, when you know that you will incur official disapproval if you fail to do so. It is always hard for people to believe in your sincerity when your change of opinion coin-

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cides with your interest. That is why the only ex-pacifists whose conversion carries conviction are those who join the armed forces and thus add to the jeopardy in which total war places their lives. Few, however, do this. The more eminent are normally over military age.

Now I want to go back and try to explain more fully why thousands of people, some for religious and others for political reasons, have felt compelled to renounce war. This is not actually the negative position that it sounds, for you cannot renounce war without making positive endeavors to build up the kind of civilization in which war will have no part.

Most of the religious war resisters—those, that is, who call themselves "Christian pacifists"—believe that war arises, not from the evil ambitions of any one man or the inherent wickedness of any one nation, but out of the collective sin of all mankind. To them, war is an inconceivable remedy for the evil from which it springs, since those who make war justify themselves by laying all the blame on the other side, whereas the first and most necessary step in the cure of sin is to acknowledge the extent to which we ourselves are at fault. Because Christ, instead of blaming human failure, took the sins of the world upon himself and sought to atone for them by his own death, his Christian pacifist disciples believe that "suffering which may lead even to the Cross" is a high road to redemption.

This type of suffering—unlike the kind of which I wrote you, that embitters because it is resisted and resented—does ennoble the individual, for its secret is a love that can be neither destroyed nor conquered, whatever penalty it may be called upon to bear. "Not by power, nor by might, but by my spirit, saith the Lord." This belief is not peculiar to British and American Christians. Recently, at a meeting in London, I heard Pastor Franz Hildebrandt, the German refugee friend of Pastor Niemoeller, testify to his conviction that the only way of permanently overcoming the evil of Nazism is the acceptance and pursuit of the way of Christ "through pain, death, and hell."

Those pacifists who do not call themselves Christians—though some of them accept the term “religious”—approach international relations from a political or an economic standpoint, usually backed by sound historical knowledge. Like the Christians, they believe that Hitler and the other dictators are not causes, but consequences, of the evil in the world, and repudiate the hysterical thesis that the Germans are a race of butcherbirds, damned and doomed to make perpetual war upon their neighbors by an exceptionally large share of original sin. Their study of modern Europe shows them that Germany is merely the latest of a long line of “aggressors” that has included Britain, France, and Spain; and that, like other nations, she is composed of several politically conscious minorities and a large politically indifferent majority. She has, however, been unlucky in her history, which has tended to encourage the domination of her most aggressive minorities because her great natural energy and efficiency have been accompanied by a lack of certain advantages enjoyed by other leading states.

You will remember that Germany, like Italy, was one of the last European nations to be unified. Until the late nineteenth century the names of both these countries were merely geographical expressions. Because Germany had been the starting place of the Reformation, she became, a century later, the battleground of the Wars of Religion. The Thirty Years War, imposed upon Germany by the policy of Cardinal Richelieu, and prolonged by France in order to keep a potential rival disunited, retarded the civilization of Central Europe for over a century. The Treaty of Westphalia, which ended the war in 1648, created a mosaic of over 300 backward little states. When Napoleon formed the Confederation of the Rhine in 1806, he did more to unite Germany than anyone before Bismarck. The Napoleonic Wars finally left the number of the German states reduced to about fifty.

Meanwhile the sixteenth-century nationalism of Britain and

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other European countries had grown into imperialism. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the British Empire had been built up through a combination of conquest, purchase, and that subtler method known as "appropriation." When young Imperial Germany, led by Bismarck who had united her and later by Kaiser Wilhelm II, desired also to join in the race for territory, she found that she could do so only at the expense of her neighbors in Europe.

The same story is approximately true of Japan, with her rapidly increasing population (now nearly 90 millions) packed into a very small country. When she too caught, from the West, the appetite for empire, the choicest Pacific territories were already occupied by the British, French, Dutch, and Americans. The other day I found an old Nelson's *Encyclopædia*, dating from my schooldays just before the last war, which gave the following figures in square miles for the territories of the chief colonial powers at that time: United Kingdom, 11,305,126; France, 4,732,100; Belgium, 910,000; Portugal, 803,310; Netherlands, 782,800; United States, 728,330; Italy, 185,200. Germany then owned 1,027,820 square miles, mainly composed of the African territories which she lost by the Treaty of Versailles. Japan, with a population already numbering more than 48 million, possessed only 114,750 square miles. The annual value of the United Kingdom's exports were then £600,000,000; of Germany's £375,000,000; of Japan's only £42,170,000.

After their defeat in 1918, the Germans were weary of war and longed for a period of uninterrupted peace. As I discovered for myself when I visited Germany in 1924, they were in no mood to embark upon a new career of national conquest. According to such eyewitnesses as William L. Shirer, the author of *Berlin Diary*, they were not in that mood even by 1939. But after the victorious Allies had seized German colonies and coalfields, written War Guilt clauses into the Versailles Treaty, imposed astronomical Reparations, occupied the Ruhr, admitted Germany with belated clumsiness into the League of Na-

tions, and refused Chancellor Bruening his peaceful economic *Anschluss* with Austria, the Weimar Republic was not unnaturally discredited, and democracy associated with humiliation. Hitler came into power because the Nazis appeared to be the only alternative to perpetual dishonor and depression.

During those years between the wars, Britain and the Dominions, by means of the Ottawa Agreements and other measures, had also put up such high tariffs against German exports that Germany was short of foreign markets. Japan had to face not only tariffs but American and Dominion immigration laws, which prevented the nationals of her overcrowded islands from emigrating to large, under-populated, and convenient territories. (The population of Japan proper averages 469 to the square mile. In U.S.A. the average is 41; in Canada 3; in Northern Australia under 2.) This policy strengthened the militarist minority in Japan, which is no more typical of the whole people than the Nazis are of Germany. Only recently the Japanese Christians presented 7,000 yen to the Christians of China for rebuilding their bombed churches.

What, you may ask, would pacifists have done about the German Nazis and the Japanese militarists? The answer is that they would probably never have had to deal with them. If, by some unlikely miracle, anti-war reaction had put a pacifist British government into power in 1918, the oppressive clauses of the Versailles Treaty would never have been written, nor the Ruhr occupied; liberal Germany would have been admitted immediately, and cordially, into the League of Nations, and Stresemann, the chief representative of the Weimar Republic, would have had much more than the "one important concession" for which he vainly asked in order to "save peace for this generation."

Other opportunities for constructive reconciliation would also have occurred. In 1932 the Disarmament Conference assembled at Geneva. Six years later, in February, 1938, Dr. Hugh Dalton, until lately the Minister of Economic Warfare

and now President of the Board of Trade, recorded of this gathering:*

"On February 10th, in the first debate of the conference, Italy proposed the abolition of all bombing airplanes. Germany, Russia, and other states supported. The United States of America was friendly to the idea, and in June President Hoover definitely came out in favor. From the first Sir John Simon and Lord Londonderry resisted and obstructed."

The representatives of a pacifist government would not have "resisted and obstructed." They would have encouraged Italy, Germany, Russia, and America—just as they would have supported the earnest plea for the entire abolition of bombing made by Japan before an official commission of jurists at The Hague in 1923, and rejected owing to French and British opposition.† They would not have allowed the World Economic Conference of 1933 to become a failure owing to the operation of those sinister underground forces known as "interests." Nor would they have permitted the Report issued in 1938 by M. van Zeeland, the Belgian Minister who was asked to draw up a plan of international economic reform, to be quietly pigeonholed, thanks to those self-same influences. They would have used that Report as the basis of an international New Deal, by which the needs of the "Have Nots" would have been met by the "Haves."

It hardly seems open to doubt that a generous policy of this kind, actuated by the Christian principle of do-as-you-would-be-done-by, would have been better for Britain, America, Russia, and China (to say nothing of menaced and mis-handled India) than the present enormous and suicidal war. Even some of the "interests" themselves would have suffered less. The European owners, for example, of tin mines, oil wells, and rubber plantations in Malaya and Java would not,

* See *Arms—and the Men*, by Oliver Brown (published by R. Thomson, 11 Spoutmouth, Glasgow, C.3).

† Tokyo Correspondent of *The Times*, October 16, 1937 (quoted by Oliver Brown).

by sharing their profits, have lost their possessions so completely as they have lost them now.

Yes, you may say, but surely it was no good contemplating a policy of this kind once the Nazis were in power, and much less after war had begun. Pacifists, both Christian and political, would reply that the way to prevent Germany (or Japan) from pursuing a career of conquest is not, yet again, to smash, humiliate, and punish—if you can—the aggressive minority and the whole country in its name, with the inevitable consequence of a new desire for revenge and a new growth of militarism. It is to divert the course of history into new channels.*

Perhaps you will argue that you cannot do this unless you first beat the Nazis by their own type of weapon. But the evidence of the last war, and the dictated peace which followed it, does not suggest that the demonism rampant in the world today—and not only in Germany and Japan—can be permanently conquered by fire and steel. At best it would only be temporarily subdued, to come back stronger than ever. Nazism thrives, as we see repeatedly, on every policy which provokes resistance, such as bombing, blockade, and threats of "retribution." These measures unite the despairing German people behind the oppressor within, as the only means of withstanding the enemy without.

Supposing instead that we were to offer, by every broadcasting device available, an immediate armistice or "people's peace," coupled with food for the starving, suggestions for reciprocal disarmament, and generous undertakings to share the rich resources still within our control. This might not influence the German and Japanese militarists, whose power flourishes on Allied ruthlessness, but it would remove from the German and Japanese people their main reason for supporting their present leaders. A magnanimous gesture is not merely one way of ending a war; it is the *only* way to end it without sowing seeds of another conflict.

* See Letter 10.

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There is not, of course, the slightest hope of obtaining such a policy from the present governments of the warring democracies. Should pacifists, as some people argue, therefore cease to demand it, and instead endorse the continued frenzy of destruction which all history shows to be the course least likely to lead to permanent peace? Are we to say that our own policy, which has never been tried, is a failure because the *opposite* of it has led the world to disaster?

In the name of truth we cannot say so—any more than the despised pioneers of the early Church could cease to urge the standards of the Kingdom of Heaven because these standards were unlikely to be achieved under the Roman Empire. We are still very far from that New Jerusalem; but if those struggling and imperfect early Christians had abandoned its ideals as "impracticable" in the same way as modern pacifists are urged to repudiate their conception of a true international society as "utopian," the teaching of the Gospels would not have survived through the ages to be a constant summons to courage and a perpetual challenge to despair. So long as a generous and imaginative policy remains untried, we cannot support a war which we believe to be caused by the failure to try it.

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THE comparison in my last letter of modern pacifists with early Christians was not due to a belief that minorities as such have any peculiar claim to merit. It was suggested by a note in the Chicago magazine *Unity*,* which compared pacifism in war-waging Britain with the position of the pioneers who founded their Church in a totalitarian world dominated by the most comprehensive military power known to history. The writer said:

"There was no answer to these men and women who refused to sacrifice to the Emperor and to take up arms to fight under his banners, when they talked about the God who 'hath made of one blood all nations of men'—no answer except persecution. But persecution has not come in England—to the glory of England be it said."

It is true that the British governments of the Second World War have learned from the records of the First that persecution tends to confer an inconvenient crown of glory upon its victim. No such radiant compensation attaches to a quiet and gradual process of suppression, to an undermining of prestige and a steady denial of opportunities, nor even to the unpublicized monotony of life in Holloway or Wormwood Scrubs. Persecution on the Nazi and Soviet models has therefore been avoided and a reasonable measure of free speech maintained. Yet whenever danger has threatened and panic awakened, the humiliation of pacifists has provided a safety valve for hysteria and intolerance. Their treatment, particularly during the summer of 1940, has usually been an accurate thermometer by which to register the national temperature.

The opening "Sitzkrieg" period of the war was one of marked toleration toward all minorities. Four months before it broke out, on May 4, 1939, Mr. Neville Chamberlain made a pronouncement defining the official attitude toward pacifists. He said:

* February, 1942.

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"We all recognize that there are people who have perfectly genuine and very deep-seated scruples on the subject of military service, and even if we do not agree with those scruples, at any rate we can respect them, if they are honestly held. . . . I want to make it clear here that in the view of the government, where scruples are conscientiously held, we desire that they shall be respected and that there should be no persecution of those who hold them."

This statement meant that, between September, 1939 and June, 1940, the majority of pacifists kept their posts and were able to say and write more or less what they chose. The few who had professional or business engagements abroad were not only allowed but, in one or two cases, actually encouraged to fulfil them. But with the fall of France a violent and unfavorable change of policy swept everyone who could not support the war into the ranks of the transgressors.

Throughout Britain during that ominous summer, government and people were seized by a panic of suspicion. The national pursuit of spies and Quislings reached a point at which loyal pacifists were labelled "Fifth Columnists," and were watched with a consternation comparable only to that which led to the reckless imprisonment of Gandhi and the Indian Congress leaders in August, 1942. At the same time the House of Commons, frantically apprehensive of invasion and other vaguer threats of which it was even more terrified, made over to well-meaning, but limited men, alarming powers of arbitrary legislation which only the highest type of spiritual genius is fit to exercise.

If the pacifist victims of these emergency powers had been German instead of British, their position—though politically more dangerous and physically far more painful—would have been more comprehensible to the authorities. They would have been ranked with the Catholic Bishops of Muenster and Berlin, the Protestant Bishop of Wuerttemberg, and the imprisoned pastors of the Confessional Church, in their "mental fight" against a regime which lives by war and oppression. That

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would be the role of British pacifists if ever this country were to be conquered by Fascism—either from within or from without.

But in 1940 it was easier for prejudiced or confused mentalities to identify the opponents of war with the supporters of Hitler than to acknowledge their endeavors to live by the standards of a society which has not yet come. Under revived or newly created regulations, pacifists began to be arrested for "insulting words" or "spreading alarm and despondency"—though most of them were much less alarmed than the government. Six leading members of the Peace Pledge Union were prosecuted for the exhibition of a two-year-old poster, and were tried and fined at Bow Street Police Court. The very supporters of pacifism who earlier in the war had been encouraged to travel owing to their international contacts, were now refused permission to leave the country, and have never since recovered their right to fulfil professional engagements abroad.

When the danger of invasion decreased this phase of political panic passed, leaving many who had suffered from it a little ashamed of their fears and behavior. But the arbitrary authority given to the government proved easier to confer than to repeal. By permitting it to draw up whatever regulations "appear to His Majesty to be necessary or expedient," Parliament had destroyed the check by which the courts were obliged to declare a regulation invalid if it went outside the powers given by the Act.

It was thus that the threat to the freedom of pacifists, like that of other minorities, became permanent and was sometimes carried out. More than a year after the fall of France, one of the best known members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Muriel Lester, was taken off an American ship at Trinidad after two years of lecturing in the United States. She was interned in Trinidad for four months, returned to Britain, detained in a Glasgow police cell, and imprisoned for several

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days in Holloway Gaol, before she recovered her freedom. Yet no charge was ever made against her, and she was given no opportunities of self-defense.

In a sense, of course, she was, and is, in disgrace. So are many other once respectable people, including your mother. I want, therefore, to try to show you that this kind of disgrace is not really disgraceful. I hope to make you understand that even the humiliations which it involves can become assets which add to knowledge and increase spiritual power if they are regarded as valuable experience obtainable in no other fashion.

In my last letter I endeavored to explain the pacifist belief that St. Paul's injunction to "overcome evil with good" lays upon Christ's followers the obligation to pursue a way of life which uses, like Gandhi in India, only the weapons of the spirit against the powers of darkness, and directs those weapons first against sin in themselves. It also obliges them to affirm that pursuit publicly, and to accept, with as much charity and as little bitterness as possible, whatever penalty their faith may involve. A decision of this kind has been a turning-point in the lives of many people. In the deliberate, unresentful choice of avoidable punishment, we come as near as most of us ever get to the heart of religious experience. Though the results of enforced pain may be evil, the redemptive function of pain consciously chosen and accepted seldom fails.

But redemption does not happen automatically. It comes, as Olive Schreiner said, from within. "It is wrought out by the soul itself, with suffering and through time." It represents the reward of victory in a conflict between man's impulses and his will.

Just because they are helpless against the Juggernaut power of the totalitarian machine, the victims of war, as my second letter indicated, become sources of potential disruptiveness. This is a dangerous threat not only to the present but to the future of any society in which they are found. I am not now

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referring only to members of minorities, but to the millions throughout the world who suffer because a few conspicuous men play the game of power politics. Since many years will certainly pass before the statesmen of a more enlightened era quit power politics for welfare politics, the thwarted energies of these multitudes, unless consciously self-disciplined, are likely to find a destructive outlet.

Nazism and Fascism themselves are typical results of resentment and humiliation. That is why I keep on insisting that you cannot defeat an armed doctrine by bombs and tanks. All you can do is temporarily to conquer the men and women enslaved to this doctrine. If you kill them the idea passes to others, rising like a Phoenix from their ashes. You may thrust a doctrine underground by victorious might, but you will not destroy it. There is only one way of getting rid of a bad idea, and that is to replace it by a better. Evil arising from injustice will never die until the injustice has been supplanted by justice.

Sometimes you will find unassertive individuals who are merely driven by conquest or oppression into the death-in-life of an enervating defeatism. This, though fatal to themselves, is largely negative in its effect on society. But the more affirmative type will always be tempted to respond with the pugnacity which develops in isolation and the vindictiveness which shapes itself into plans for revenge. These plans will be directed against whatever, or whoever, has precipitated the humiliating situation—a state, a ministry, a political party, a person. The resentment which inspires them may be visited upon the government officials who have applied emergency regulations against the sufferer in a fashion which seems to him deliberately and personally inhuman, rather than an expression of the preoccupied indifference which is usually responsible. Or it may be reserved for other more fortunate individuals who have found excellent reasons for pursuing a less thorny path, thereby avoiding frustration and the bitterness which it causes.

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You can take it that every member of an unpopular minority is liable to the growth of a persecution mania. I have had letters from young women who lament the deliberate malice of their former friends, and from young men who believe that the authorities are trying to starve or terrorize them into military service despite a recognized conscientious objection. Some pacifist groups behave like members of a leper colony; they embrace persecution and misrepresentation instead of boldly disregarding them. Thus, by self-isolation, they add to the ostracism which is only too convenient for warmakers to impose upon critics who insist on exposing hypocrisy and telling the truth.

In this way humiliation may lead to a pathological condition in which, as in a diseased body, the germs flourish of still worse conditions—permanent resentment, ingrowing hatred, anti-social conspiracy. The whole history of post-war Germany illustrates this process. Yet persons enduring persecution are actually rendered capable, by that very fact, of becoming more sensitive to the vast accumulation of pain in the world, and thus of learning a compassion for others worse off than themselves in which their own sorrows will be speedily disregarded.

Let us imagine two typical men whose minority opinions have brought them humiliation. One is a public figure—a politician, perhaps, or a writer. Because his country has gone to war, suffered reverses, and become panic-stricken, he suddenly finds himself "suspect" and unpopular. He is forbidden to travel to other countries where much of his work was done, refused permission to lecture or attend conferences abroad, compulsorily separated from old friends or members of his family living overseas, and even prohibited from entering "defense" areas of his own country in order to obtain material for books or speeches. He is, in fact, in the same situation as that which prevents me from coming to America and seeing you.

There are few sources of frustration more bitter than the

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knowledge that some rare gift, some skill perfected by the practice of half a lifetime, is wasting unused; denied not only its normal expression, but prevented from reaching those who would benefit by it for reasons which have no direct relevance to their need. The note of grief for such wastage echoes through Milton's most famous sonnet:

"And that one talent, which is death to hide,

Lodged with me useless. . . ."

Nobody likes, in addition, having his name on a "list," or knowing that his private letters are carefully read and copied by strangers and then filed in a government "dossier" for inspection by officials. It involves a loss of freedom which is none the less galling because it is not obvious. So though the blow to our public man's pocket is probably severe, it is nothing to the assault on his pride, skill, prestige, and affections. He had assumed his integrity to be self-evident, and had never imagined that a deep spiritual or intellectual conviction—arising, perhaps, from his own experiences in the last war—could be interpreted as a readiness to betray his country.

The other man, though less conspicuous, has held an equally honorable position. He is a teacher in a secondary school, popular and respected. Suddenly danger threatens his district, and the term "Fifth Columnist" is hurled at him. His local authority subjects him to humiliating inquiries; his few remaining friends advise resignation. The parents who once asked for his counsel look askance at him; even his pupils, following the example of their elders, cut him in the street. His livelihood and his reputation alike are gone.

Both these men, normally loyal and benevolent, are liable to become disruptive forces. Their bitterness against the Nazis, who may have precipitated the war but are unknown and remote, is nothing to their resentment against the Home Secretary or the local education officer, who are the direct causes of their suffering. They forget to contrast their relative immunity with the torture, imprisonment, and "liquidation" reserved for minorities in totalitarian states. So they secretly

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meditate on picturesque revenges, and their hearts turn sour within them.

But we need not leave them there. If either has the capacity for salvation which is inherent in many, he may one day recognize that he has passed through a spiritual experience. Nobody can foresee how this will happen. The winds of God blow as they will, and this man may find himself at his spiritual crossroads through reading a poem, or looking at a beautiful scene, or walking alone in an empty valley on a fine autumn day. But he cannot fail to realize his sudden reconciliation with society, for it will spring from the knowledge that he can only work effectively for the sorrowful and oppressed if he gives up all hope of remaining "respectable." Like Christ before him, he must put himself among the felons and endure as best he can the calumnious assertions that are made about him. By descending to the level of the outcasts whom once, perhaps, he contemptuously pitied, he will acquire a compassionate understanding of degradation and its effect upon the mind and spirit.

You remember Winifred Holtby, of course, and her novel *South Riding*. If you have read it, you will recollect the advice which Alderman Mrs. Beddows gives to the schoolteacher, Sarah Burton, in rescuing her from despair after the death of Robert Carne:

"When there's no hope and no remedy, then you can begin to learn and to teach what you've learned. The strongest things in life are without triumph. The costliest things you buy are those for which you can't even pay yourself. It's only when you're in debt and a pauper, when you have nothing, not even the pride of sorrow, that you begin to understand a little."

As soon as you find yourself on a path which can lead to no worldly advantage, you are freed at last from the competitive scheming of seekers after office or place. Once you are in this position, you have no longer any share in the perpetual anxieties of those to whom this war appears as a source of power or financial advancement if only the right strings can

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be pulled, the right support elicited before someone else obtains it. Your road to salvation lies through pain and dishonor, for which there is no competition.

That is why a German pastor, detained in prison by the Nazis, wrote to his wife: "It is just this humiliation which is so necessary for us, and God uses it to unlock us inwardly and to ripen us for his Word and for his consolation."* He knew that grievances vanish and vindictiveness disappears with the discovery that every sorrow bears its own compensation which enlarges the scope of human mercy. It is not easy to relinquish self-pity, for this involves the unflattering admission that we have indulged in it. But once we can achieve the imaginative realization that the sufferings of many are greater than ours, we find ourselves possessed with a desire to relieve them which causes our own sense of injury to be set aside and finally forgotten.

You need not imagine that frustration is peculiar to one minority, or even to minorities in general. It is part of the burden borne today by every victim of power in a world where power politics have met their Nemesis. I have tried to show you that the best hope for all such victims lies in their frank recognition of their danger to their fellows, and in their continued resistance to its growth. They should not be overtroubled if they can manage no more than self-conquest, for that in itself is part of the conquest of its own evil and inertia by society.

Once they have understood that even degradation can be a salutary and creative experience, the country to which they belong is on its way to learning the same lesson. Only humiliation with honor—the honor of self-discipline and of new wisdom wrought out of bitter experience—can save men and women degraded by war from becoming sources of hatred and vengeance, and enable them to contribute in their unique fashion to those abiding things "which belong to our peace."

* See *I Was in Prison*. Letters from German Pastors. (Student Christian Movement Press.)

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THE many logical arguments put forward in support of war do not alter the fact that it is now the deadliest disease of our civilization, and must be overcome if that civilization is to continue. Mere victory over Hitler will not overcome it. It will only serve to aggravate the disease if the wrongs from which Hitlerism sprang—monopoly capitalism, imperialistic nationalism, poverty, hunger, unemployment, repression—continue unchecked into the post-war era. There is little evidence as yet that those who are conducting the war on behalf of the United Nations propose to check them.

Pacifists are people who want to fight the disease, instead of wasting life, time, and energy in attacking the symptoms. They have come by different roads—the best, perhaps, being actual experience of warfare—to the realization that modern war never achieves even the ends for which it is ostensibly waged, let alone a stable world and a peaceful society. Believing this, they would be false to themselves and their faith in man's capacity for redemption if they supported the present war and collaborated with its leaders.

Perhaps you will feel that those who share this conviction and act upon it ought to be specially enlightened people. A few indeed have been; it can justly be said of such men as H. R. L. Sheppard, George Lansbury, and Max Plowman that they were saints on earth. But unfortunately all three of them are dead; and we, their successors, have to struggle on as best we can without their special gifts of religious insight to help us. Often the words which St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians in the early Church are only too true of modern pacifists: "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

Apart from such conflicts—which are, I fear, characteristic of all sinners who are trying to be saints with no better spiritual equipment than other people—there are one or two groups

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which do the cause of pacifism harm rather than good. I am not speaking here of the few actual shirkers who always manage to creep in war time under the pacifist umbrella. The movement itself objects to them at least as much as the general public, for they cannot be counted on either to carry conviction before a Tribunal, or to lend a hand in a "Blitz." They are as disadvantageous to true pacifism as those temporary adherents who wax eloquent in the cause of peace only during the intervals between wars. The two categories about which I meant to write you are the belligerent pacifists, and the self-righteous.

The "pacifism" of the belligerents is nothing other than a form of inverted militarism. They are incurable minoritarians with a passion for unpopularity, who will make use of any movement which enables them to express their deep dislike of all majorities. Far from attempting to act as reconciling influences, their purpose is usually to challenge and provoke. If they do not succeed in getting themselves persecuted, suppressed, or imprisoned, they are disappointed. They feel that the sole test of their sincerity is the extent to which they can embarrass the government.

Pacifists of this type forget that embarrassing the government, necessary as it may be at times, is hardly a constructive occupation. There are many important subjects, such as the state of the post-war world, which are vital to all persons of good will and intelligence but in which governments take little interest. You will find that the worse a government is, the less interest it takes.

Apparently it does not occur to these militant pacifists that the most effective method of war resistance is to increase the number of war resisters—who can be drawn only from the ranks of the war supporters, and are not attracted by provocation. The best method of making breaches in the solid wall of war acceptance is the joint consideration by pacifists and non-pacifists of problems in which the evil consequences of

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war are most apparent. It is clear, for instance, that in the bombing of civilians, and the food blockade of Europe, there is a departure from the standards of international law never equalled in previous wars.

The pacifist's contention that modern war, with its huge apparatus of propaganda, involves a process of spiritual deterioration which destroys such moral purpose as it ever had, is here supported by obvious facts which no reasonable person can deny.* But belligerent pacifists regard the making of converts by an assemblage of facts and an appeal to reason, as "being respectable," or "currying favor with the public." They do infinite harm to pacifism by giving well-disposed people the impression that the movement is solely composed of irrational, obstinate, and irresponsible fanatics.

With the self-righteous we can have more sympathy, for it is always difficult to put a deep conviction into words without sounding "smug." I do not criticize them because they express themselves clumsily or priggishly; even a practiced writer of many years' standing finds it hard to say precisely what he or she means on a matter of conscience. Where they fail is in their tendency to regard fighting men, and those who accept military methods, as thoughtless and ignorant, and to forget that the young soldiers, sailors, and airmen of today are as much victims of power politics as themselves.

Nobody could make this mistake who had once been part, even as a noncombatant, of an army at war, and had seen the sacrificial spirit in which young men, with their lives unfulfilled, endure their disabling wounds or go out to die. Ever since I watched the British soldiers at Étaples talking to my wounded German patients, I have realized that the fighting volunteer and the pacifist have far more in common than either has with the "old men" who send the one to death and

* See Letter 9.

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the other to prison.* I know one young soldier, determined never to kill a fellow creature, who has become a volunteer member of a bomb-disposal unit because he suspects that in his case a "conscientious objection" would be mainly a rationalization of fear and distaste. The test in each instance is the readiness to give up everything, including life itself, for the sake of a moral conviction.

We must recognize that, in the present state of opinion in this country and the United States, the decision to fight was inevitable for most of those who made it. A friend of the late Evelyn Underhill, Mrs. Marjorie Vernon, emphasized this point in a letter sent to the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship. She wrote:

"God, we are taught, judges us by our fundamental 'intention.' It seems to me that the average Englishman's 'intention' in taking part in this war is to vindicate freedom, truth, mercy, and justice. What would his 'intention' be if he kept out of it? Remember, England is not a truly Christian country. Ethically, perhaps she may lay claim to be—though even here there are gaps—but on the religious, the supernatural level, she certainly is not. . . . If all England were profoundly Christian her refusal to fight would not be a negative refusal, but would be vigorous and positive; not so much that she would not fight as that she *would* do something else. Realistically believing that 'to them that love God all things work together for good,' she would be content to follow Christ's teaching, leaving the outcome—whatever it might be—in God's hands and fully accepting it. . . . At present, however, such an attitude and such behavior is practically unthinkable. Only a few people born out of due season see these truths which belong to the future rather than to 1941."

Despite the fairness of this judgment, I receive many letters

* The late Colonel T. E. Lawrence bore witness to this resemblance in a famous passage from *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*: "When we achieved and the new world dawned, the old men came out again and took from us our victory, and remade it in the likeness of the former world they knew. Youth could win, but had not learned to keep, and was pitifully weak against age. We stammered that we had worked for a new heaven and a new earth, and they thanked us kindly and made their peace."

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from men and women in the armed forces who want to discuss the justification and purposes of the war. Later I shall have more to say about the bond of sympathy between the convinced pacifist, of whatever age, and the young generation which is again called upon to offer up its health, strength, and opportunities in a war made by elderly politicians whose aims and standards it does not share.* But the development of that bond of sympathy depends upon our ability, as pacifists, to use rightly the type of sacrifice which we are called upon to make. It is nothing, in any case, to the sacrifice demanded of the soldier. If he can face wounds and death, whether endured or inflicted, we can surely learn wisdom from criticism and degradation.

The essence of such wisdom is a clear understanding of pacifism and its function. Some people join the pacifist movement without examining either the ethics or the politics of their position, which explains the superficial escapism of inverted belligerency and government baiting. It is the pacifist's obligation to be both realist and idealist; to face existing facts while never losing sight of the world which he desires to create. His part, as a living leaven within the lump of popular traditions and assumptions, may seem trivial in itself, yet his task is nothing less than an attempt to change the thinking of his nation, and beyond that of a greater society.

He begins modestly by trying to enlarge—sometimes only one by one—the circle of those who endeavor to shape their lives in accordance with a particular set of values. By these "values" I mean the conduct of that ideal community to which poets and prophets have given many names. Christ called it the Kingdom of Heaven. For Dante and Milton, it was Paradise; for Sir Thomas More, Utopia; for Blake a mystic "Jerusalem" to be built by "mental fight."

The movement that seeks to create this community which knows neither force nor frontiers is inevitably a revolutionary

* See Letter 7.

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movement. It is a society within society, a living force which depends neither on economic systems nor political machinery—though it may work through both—but upon the power of the spirit. Today it is the only movement which possesses this revolutionary character. The once progressive "Left" has become reactionary; it is in alliance with those forces which applaud totalitarianism and war. It merely prefers one form of totalitarianism to another. Hence the paradox by which gatherings called to reaffirm the democratic principles of free speech and a free press are crowded by the supporters of a regime which suppresses both.

Perhaps you feel that a minority so small, surrounded by powerful forces so adverse to its growth, is unlikely ever to achieve its purpose of leavening the lump. But you must remember that nearly all the great revolutions of history not only started as minority movements, but seldom became anything else even when they had succeeded. In the words of John Wesley:

"Give me one hundred men who fear nothing but God, hate nothing but sin, and have the love of Jesus in their hearts; and with them I can move the world."

I can think of few important movements for reform in which success was won by any method other than that of an energetic minority presenting the indifferent majority with a *fait accompli*, which was then accepted. The only exceptions are perhaps the great religious movements which, like Christianity, started from a tiny group, but went on to capture half of mankind. But even here, as I have tried to show you, there is a wide distinction between the genuine working believers and the vast bulk of lip servers who make up the substantial majority of both religious bodies and political parties.

Shortly before this war, when we were driving together to a meeting, George Lansbury told me that in his long life he had seen so many apparently hopeless causes succeed, that his faith in the ultimate rejection of war by civilized men and

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women remained unshaken. His life spanned a period which not only included such movements as slave emancipation, the abolition of child labor, prison reform, trade unionism, socialism, and universal education, but saw social habits now universally accepted pass from the stage where they were regarded with horrified disapproval to one in which it was forgotten that their desirability had ever been questioned.

Once, on a public platform, I heard Dr. Marie Stopes read aloud from a mid-Victorian newspaper a paragraph imputing recklessness and immorality to a certain group of "advanced" persons. Was this a diatribe against free love, birth control, or companionate marriage? Not at all. The protest was directed against those who had adopted the habit of taking a regular bath.

One of the reforms most successfully carried through by a small minority was woman suffrage. There has been some confusion on this issue, since the First World War broke out before the effect of the suffragist propaganda was fully apparent. The gap between the demand for female suffrage, and the first partial acceptance of it in Britain in 1918, enabled the opponents of the feminist campaign to say that the vote was conceded to women as a reward for their part in winning the war. But in some countries, such as the United States, where woman suffrage was also granted at the end of the war, the amount of war service performed by women had been very small. The vote would never have been conceded had not a hard-working and articulate minority brought their claims, before the war, to a point where these appeared not only conceivable, but rational and just.

In the same way the movement to abolish war is likely not only to begin, but to end, as the achievement of a minority which ultimately persuades the majority to adopt its view. The elimination of war and the building of permanent peace differ from other great movements for the liberation of humanity from the evil within itself, only because the sphere

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of action is so much wider and the problems involved far more complicated.

The minority working for international peace has, as I see it, a fourfold function. Its members have first to fulfil the duty of self-conquest described in my last letter. This really involves a new conception of honor. It means understanding that we cannot exercise compassion until we have endured humiliation, nor effectively help the victims of society until we have been in the dock and the prison beside them. When a man has conquered his own bitterness and learned to wrest honor from shame, he has brought humanity's struggle to overcome war a little nearer to victory. He has also achieved a new kind of freedom which compensates for his earlier frustration.

The respectable have so much to sacrifice: their prestige, their popularity with their neighbors, the good opinion of their friends, the approval of the government. Naturally they have to think carefully before associating with the oppressed or endorsing "extreme" opinions, and we cannot be surprised that their decision regarding such association is frequently in the negative. Hence it is a great advantage to be so "disrespectable" that one has nothing to lose. One can then quit the upperdogs and, joining the underdogs, begin to see their situation as they see it themselves. Charity born of shared experience is the only power which can finally vanquish evil; that is why those who believe in its authority must take the risks that it demands in a world which does not yet accept it. A Quaker friend once wrote to me of these risks:

"Solid, dogged, unchanging love. Suffering and injustice lovingly endured. Force can restrain the evil man; only love can change him, and when Christ went to the Cross it was no mere acceptance of the inevitable, but his deliberate response to the hatred and selfishness of men, his final assault on the powers of evil. The battle continues now, in every individual life and in a world at war; the spiritual forces we cannot reckon, the human one is the scattered company of all who try to live that way."

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Of the three other functions of our minority, I shall write you in my remaining letters. The first, which depends for its value upon the conception that I have called "humiliation with honor," is to give whatever assistance we can to those victims of power who endure more than ourselves—prisoners, refugees, the starving, the young, the bereaved. We must keep ourselves imaginatively conscious of the cost of war in human suffering; we must also investigate and expose that cost, and find, if we can, some form of redemptive consolation for those who have to pay it.

Second, I believe that we are called upon, humbly and without self-righteousness, to keep alive those civilized values of charity, compassion, and truth to which men return with relief and remorse as soon as war is over, wondering how ever their spiritual focus became so distorted. If this includes the duty of protest against hatred, cruelty, self-interest, and falsehood whenever we come across them, we must not shrink from the resulting unpopularity. It is quite different from the unpopularity-for-its-own-sake which the pacifist who would not be happy if he was not victimized sets out to incur. Our business is to keep our heads, and try to see the events of the war in the largest possible perspective against their background of history. We must endeavor to find out and tell the truth, facing facts as they are rather than as propaganda and wishful thinking desire them to be.

Finally, from our study of history and our careful watch on present developments, we must seize upon such evidence of the shape of the future as we are able to acquire. This does not mean constructing an Eldorado of gilt-edged "Peace Aims" which have no relation to the facts as we know them. It does mean trying, within the limits of our knowledge, to plan for the post-war world as its dim outlines emerge through the stifling smoke clouds of war.

Our task is that of trying to change the course of history by acting as a revolutionary leaven within society. But we

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must know in what direction we wish to divert it before we can even begin. Idealists in general, and pacifists in particular, are apt to talk about "the future" as if futurity were an end in itself. Obviously the future will be no better than the present unless we can learn from the mistakes of the past what its pattern should be.

6. THEIR NAME IS LEGION

IT is often said by those who support the present war that, of course, they desire peace as much as anyone else, and in any *normal* war they would be pacifists themselves. But this war, they maintain, is different. It was made by international gangsters upon their peace-loving neighbors, and we have no alternative but to punish them and make them pay for their wickedness.

Unfortunately for this argument, the two World Wars, inflicted, for the first time in history, upon one generation, have come so close together that many people can remember exactly the same contention being used between 1914 and 1918. In those days it would indeed have surprised me and my contemporaries if some prophet had told us that the time would come when Kaiser Wilhelm II, who was represented as twin brother to the Spirit of Carnage, would be regarded as a gentlemanly and chivalrous opponent compared with that unspeakable mountebank, Adolf Hitler. If you could transport yourself back through the numerous wars of modern history, I suspect you would find that every war is an exception, a *different* war, to those who uphold it.

Despite the strong emotions of my friends who insist that gangsters must be punished, I have never yet obtained a satisfactory reply to my inquiry how a war is to be waged which actually penalizes those who made it, while avoiding the rest. Although it would not solve the underlying problems of poverty and unemployment, or avert the envious eyes of "Have Not" Powers from rich territories occupied by Britain, not for two years but for two hundred, there would be some justice in a war in which the sole participants and the only casualties were the responsible leaders of the countries involved.

But the "punishment" meted out by war does not fall upon its organizers. Their near relatives seldom run exceptional risks either. It is the "little man" and his family who are ex-

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pected to do all the killing and the dying. The price of this war is paid by its innumerable obscure and helpless victims, who are bombed, blasted, massacred, starved, transported, and conscripted without even understanding what it is all about. It is upon the prisoners, the exiles, the homeless, the famished, the bereaved who mourn, and the young who are homesick and frustrated, that "retribution" descends in total war. So many men and women the world over now drag out a weary existence behind the bars of prisons or internment camps, that we who are still free to stand in the sun and walk through the fields must consider ourselves fortunate, whatever the war may have cost us.

The other day, in a pamphlet called *A Peace Aims Declaration* issued by the War Resisters International, I read these words:

"The proper concern of all people of good will should be all forms of human oppression, degradation, and unnecessary suffering. War is only one aspect of these evils and it will be found that when these are dealt with the problem of war and peace will be largely dealt with in the process."

That is why I believe that pacifists have a special responsibility toward all those who, like themselves, are victims of power. It is their business to find out what more can be done for these sufferers, not only by others, but by the actual victims in terms of self-conquest and spiritual discipline. The greater the degree of freedom possessed by the pacifist minorities concerned in this quest, the larger the measure of their obligation. For this reason those who are citizens of Britain or the United States, where some considerable remnants of democracy still protect minorities against the full ruthlessness of totalitarianism, are specially called upon to help their fellow victims, and to defend to the full limits of their restricted powers the surviving individual rights in their own societies.

Once this responsibility is recognized, the pacifist's sense of isolation and futility is over. There can be no better contribution to a real victory (which means a victory over the

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reactionary values of the Hitlerism that we are fighting in every war-making society) than the attempt, however limited in scope, to rescue forsaken individuals from spiritual darkness and physical pain. To help them to find in defeat or exile a new and deeper level of experience is itself part of the endeavor to maintain those religious and social values by which democracy has lived.

Where, you may ask, shall we find prisoners and internees in England? Perhaps it will surprise you to know that, at the beginning of 1942, over 6,500* people were still interned. This figure does not include the detainees in Canada and other parts of the British Empire, where the periodic imprisonment of India's would-be liberators is a strange and tragic comment on Britain's fight for freedom.† For one conspicuous internee who has been released, such as Benjamin Greene, the Hertfordshire Justice of the Peace, a hundred others are detained of whom no one has heard. At the same date there were 519 conscientious objectors in prison, of whom 119 were serving sentences of twelve months.‡ Each new military disaster which lengthens the war, and divides me from you and S., lengthens also the sense of wasted life and power which oppresses these men and women in gaol.

There are also numbers of German and Italian prisoners

* Ed. Note: No official figures are available on the number of internees in the United States. However, more than 100,000 persons are in Relocation Centers closely resembling internment camps, simply because they are of Japanese ancestry. The majority of these are American-born citizens.

† The following significant words were used by Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit (Nehru's sister) in the course of a reply to an appeal made in 1941 by certain English women to the women of India: "We are now told that it is the duty of our sons to go and shed their blood in a foreign land to defend the freedom which is in peril—and yet if they are bold enough to ask whose freedom it is they are to defend they are treated as traitors and spend long years languishing behind prison bars. Has freedom a double meaning—does it mean one thing for you and yours and something different for us?"

Mrs. Pandit was arrested and detained at Allahabad on August 13, 1942.

‡ Ed. Note: As of February 15, 1943, there were approximately 1,200 conscientious objectors in American prisons, with sentences ranging from one year to five years.

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of war in this country, though military regulations and the hostility of public opinion make it more difficult to give help to them. In a letter to *The Times** I read that some Italian prisoners of war in a small camp in England performed a typical act of courtesy on All Saints' Day, 1941. It happened that this day was also their pay day, when they received their small "token" money for work in the fields. The first man called explained that he did not desire to draw his pay. When he was asked what he wanted to do with it, he said: "I wish it to be given to the poor of X" (the village in which they were working), "especially to any poor families who have lost men in the present war." The rest of the men followed his example, and between them they collected £2. 14s. 3d. There were under 200 prisoners, most of them being peasants from southern Italy.

You will therefore understand why I regretted seeing the following paragraphs in a Sunday newspaper, by a journalist† with a large public who in peace time was an eloquent believer in the Christian virtues:

"Not long ago, somewhere in England, a deputation of women—typical nice country folk—came to see the commandant of a prisoners of war camp.

"This is the question they asked: 'What can we do to help your Italian prisoners, so far from their homes?'

"And this is the answer they received: 'Well, first you must ask yourselves: What can you do to help the soldiers of the Scottish regiment who are guarding the prisoners, as they are also far from their native heath and in a strange land?'

"I am afraid I should have said something much stronger myself. Wouldn't you?"

Fortunately we are encouraged by the knowledge that all over the world there are merciful people who seek, however limited their power, to comfort prisoners and internees. British men and women, amongst others, are receiving this comfort.

* November 22, 1941.

† Godfrey Winn in the *Sunday Express*, December 7, 1941.

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Early in 1942 I read in *The Friend** that an army captain on the staff of an Isle of Man internment camp had just heard from his sister, interned with her two children in southwest Germany, that German Friends had been very good to them. At Christmas they provided a Christmas tree, and presents for the children.

Often the refugees themselves, whether free or interned, are enrichers too. Like the Huguenots who came to England after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, they bring new industries and new ideas, and the younger ones give us back some of the youthful energy which the cities of Britain lost when thousands of children departed into the country or overseas. Even when many refugees were hurriedly interned during the summer of 1940, some of them went on regarding themselves as unofficial ambassadors to the country which treated them as "suspects."

One German girl from Glasgow, who had never known any home but Scotland since she was eight weeks old, was interned for eight and a half months on the Isle of Man because she was born in Hamburg. Her younger brothers and sisters, born in Britain, were left to carry on their normal lives. "The memory of this experience will remain with me forever," she wrote to me, but added: "In spite of all that has happened I bear no resentment whatever to those responsible for the too hasty roundup—on the contrary, I am indebted to them for the wealth of knowledge I have gained from my experiences in an internment camp."

Another internee, Dr. Walter Zander, describing his nine months' internment as a Jewish enemy alien,† wrote that the most interesting aspect of this ordeal was not the suffering of the victims, but the extent to which they had been able to stand up spiritually to their trial and to transform their adversities into assets. He noticed the opening of this "spiritual

* February 13, 1942.

† *International Fellowship of Reconciliation Leaflets*, No. 7.

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defense," on the morning after his internment, by a refugee publisher who sat down amid hundreds of tired, restless men to read the Bible for the first time in the original Hebrew. Another, a Greek scholar, began one sunny afternoon in the midst of tumult and anxiety to read aloud the song of Odysseus and Nausicaa from his pocket copy of Homer. Soon these men and others of the same quality were quietly carrying on their own shoulders the strain of the whole refugee community.

"It was somewhat like the fairy tale," concluded Dr. Zander, "where a child falls into a deep well and finds at the bottom a wonderful green meadow; and the old truth became absolutely clear to me that it depends largely upon ourselves whether or not we turn suffering into blessing."

The danger, as he perceives, is that of leaving prison or internment an angry, passionate rebel, anxious to "get his own back" on the system which has caused his suffering. But in this case the humiliation will remain; honor will never wipe it out, for true honor and dignity are incompatible with bitterness, resentment, and the desire for vengeance. All captives whose conditions are not intolerable, whether prisoners of war, racial prisoners, or prisoners for conscience' sake, can help to solve the enormous problems of the present age by devoting their enforced leisure to the reading and thinking for which those who contend with war-time obligations have ever less time.

In these years during which the threat of prison has never seemed far away, I have often considered which books I would choose as permanent companions if I were arrested. If I were allowed half a dozen, I would select them, I think, in the following order: *The Bible*; Plato's *Apology of Socrates*; Dante's *Divine Comedy*; Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*; Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; and Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Does it perhaps surprise you that I should put the Bible first? Some day you will find that its words, like those of all great literature, come suddenly alive under the

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impact of crisis. Verses which have become, through familiarity, a mere sequence of hackneyed phrases, leap from the page with a sudden relevance which illumines one's consciousness like a flame.

Take, for instance, the familiar passage from St. Matthew xxiv, verses 7 to 14, which begins with the words: "For nation shall rise against nation." Could we, who are often isolated and despised, find a better description of our own anxieties than these verses which had lost their sharp edge through repetition? Do we not all know friends who have been "offended"; who have "betrayed" us in ways which they rationalize as excusable, and whom we, in our exasperation and disappointment, have betrayed in turn? That "the love of many shall wax cold," we realize regretfully of ourselves and others. The analysis goes home just because it illustrates those abiding conflicts which occur in every age; and have to be reconciled again and again. Surely, then, we can embrace with renewed courage the final promise of salvation for those who endure to the end! This experience of coming closer than ever before to the mind of God through the words of Christ, makes the bitterest humiliation worth while.

But there are many too deeply impaired by the disasters of the war to be capable of accepting such consolation. They are the starving, dying millions of Occupied Europe, against whom, as Dr. Nansen recorded after the last war, "those who are ossifying behind their political platforms and who hold aloof from suffering humanity" have again steeled their hearts.*

* Dr. Fridtjof Nansen's opinion of the politicians who had impeded his work for the victims of the last war for democracy was recorded in the speech which he made on receiving the Nobel Prize in 1923. The full quotation runs as follows: "They represented that barren self-sufficiency, with its absence of any wish to understand other points of view, which is Europe's greatest danger. They called us fanatics, soft heads, sentimental idealists, because we have, it may be, a grain of faith that there is some good even in our enemies. . . . I don't think we are really very dangerous. But the people who are ossifying behind their political platforms and who hold aloof from suffering humanity, from starving, dying millions—it is they who are helping to lay Europe waste."

THEIR NAME IS LEGION

Their numbers are so great, their family lives so tragic, and their sorrows so fathomless, that we who have implored our government to show pity on them by lifting the blockade sufficiently to permit the passage of some limited supplies, can picture their catastrophe only if we "break it up small" and see it in terms of some beloved child on the verge of starvation. What should I do if for months I had watched you and S. getting thinner, paler, darker under the eyes, more quietly apathetic, until at last I knew that I had only enough for one more meal left in the cupboard? That is how I try to look at it.

We have to do what we can because no Nansen has yet arisen to save these starving peoples. In this war no Hoover Commission has been allowed to feed Belgium, where two million young Belgians are threatened with permanently warped minds and impaired physiques. Only a few relief cargoes have so far reached Greece, where last winter two thousand human beings died each day in Athens* and those who survived were so cold from hunger that they even opened the graves and robbed the dead of their garments.† These victims of the German occupation and the British blockade do not cease to die because the attention of newspaper readers is directed to Singapore or Cairo or Stalingrad.

It is difficult for this well-fed country to picture the results of starvation, and it must be impossible for productive and self-sufficient America. Yet the conscience of the United States has been more sensitive on this matter than our own. We in Britain, though kindly and well disposed, are not an imaginative people. When we do get roused, we tend to be moved to righteous wrath by the crimes of other nations, while remaining indifferent to the victims of our own policy. Even now, few citizens of this Empire realize the basic similarity of Hitler's racial doctrine of a Nordic *Herrenvolk*, and our own

* *The Times*, January 22, 1942.

† *Evening Standard*, January 28, 1942.

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complacent assumption of white superiority to the colored races under our rule in Asia and Africa.

In the nineteenth century, our passionate sympathy with the Bulgarians and Armenians who suffered Turkish atrocities was combined with a singular insensitiveness towards the exploitation of the workers in British slums and factories, and with an almost universal ignorance of the oppression endured by native populations in British-controlled territories. Today our conscience is stirred by the crimes of the Nazis, but not by the European sufferers from our own blockade. We do not rid ourselves of responsibility by saying that their plight is due solely to Germany. In the case of Greece and Belgium it cannot be, since before the war both these countries imported over 40 per cent of their food. If we could save the victims of famine, yet deliberately refrain from doing so, we are morally as responsible for their deaths as any Nazi conqueror.

Not long ago I was discussing our national "blind spots" with a Quaker refugee from Central Europe, who after the last war helped to nurse some of the children suffering from tuberculosis caused by the food blockade of 1919. Other relief workers have described the small boys and girls whom they saw lying like limp rag dolls in the parks of Vienna because their limbs were too weak to carry them.* This woman told me that the flesh literally dropped from the bones of the children whom she nursed. She wrote to me afterwards:

"I cannot describe those sufferings to those who have not seen them. One boy, a child of nine or ten, had the face of a man of seventy, full of unspeakable suffering and patience; his arms and legs were only bones, partly covered with skin, but the larger part not at all covered, with the few muscles loosening from the bones, completely sore and skinless. Terribly painful to touch. His legs and arms were hung up by some contraption, because he could not have borne the pressure of them lying on the bed. . . . This was one case.

* Cf. Maurice L. Rowntree, *Mankind Set Free* (Cape, 1939).

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There were hundreds of them, in varying stages. Hundreds of boys and girls of all ages, two to sixteen, whose little bodies had deep holes, as if shot. This could be cured, but it would take six years or longer. I only describe this to you because you want to know the effects of starvation. It is *just hell*."

In 1922 this Friend paid a short visit to England. At that time anti-war reaction was growing, and many peace organizations were eagerly gathering members. One afternoon she joined a mass open-air peace demonstration in Hyde Park, and heard Maude Royden describe the effects of the blockade on Central Europe. As she listened to this account of the pitiful events which she herself had just experienced, my friend turned from the speaker to examine the audience. From the expressions — interested, indifferent, complacent — on the faces of those well-nourished men and women, she realized that not even the poorest member of the crowd understood the meaning of starvation. Her experiences had led her to dedicate herself to the cause of peace; she now perceived the difficulties of such work in Britain.

A recent incident in which I took part was not dissimilar. I had spoken at a meeting in Sheffield, held to urge controlled food relief for Occupied Europe, when a questioner at the back of the hall made the point that the blockade and its effects were more merciful than the mammoth bombing raids which the R.A.F. had just carried out on Rostock and Cologne. He fully believed this, because he knew what bombing meant, but had never experienced starvation.

I agreed with him that the mass bombing of civilian populations is not only a questionable method of winning a war from the military standpoint, but leaves such grim memories of carnage that post-war relations are likely to be embittered so long as recollection continues. But bombing, at its worst, means the sudden death and injury of thousands of men, women, and children in a limited number of cities. Blockade involves the slow death by starvation of millions in many cities of many

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countries. Even the end of the war does not end its effects. For those who survive, it means stunted bodies, ruined health, and embittered characters; and its consequences may be passed on from generation to generation. That is why pacifists, few in number, universally dismissed—to use Nansen's words again—as “fanatics, soft heads, sentimental idealists,” must do what they can to stir compassion. Too often, nowadays, compassion seems to be regarded as a form of “Fifth Columnism.” People fed on a diet of propaganda forget that it is pity which differentiates man from the sub-human animal who destroys his victim without feeling compunction.

I am no defeatist—that word which the critics of pacifism use so lightly, without any regard for its true significance. The only real defeatism is the belief—which we see all round us, but which I do not share—that human reason is unequal to the problems which confront it, and must therefore give way to force. I want to see our victory in this war. But victory for me does not mean acquiring the power to push other peoples into that outer darkness of desperation which gave birth to the ugly militarism in Germany and Japan that is now our Nemesis. It means the triumph of those spiritual qualities to which many people in this country seem as sadly indifferent as those whom we call our enemies—truth, justice, mercy, brotherhood. That is why I am ending this letter with a sentence which George Eliot wrote in *The Mill on the Floss*: “More helpful than all wisdom is one draught of simple human pity that will not forsake us.”

7. YOUTH AND THE WAR

THERE are always a few men and women who welcome a war. For some it is a source of financial profit or coveted political office; to others it offers a convenient licence for the exercise of cruel instincts. To still more it provides a way of escape from failure, boredom, unemployment, or insoluble domestic dilemmas. It is not of these that I am writing today, but of that great majority to whom war brings tragedy.

In my last letter I mentioned the prisoners, refugees, and starving multitudes of Occupied Europe whom pacifists have a special obligation to serve. I want now to write of three more groups—of which each member, don't forget, is an *individual*, with hopes, fears, affections, emotions, and aspirations exactly like yours and mine. They are the young men and women whose vital years of preparation for life are everywhere being stolen from them by the state; the children growing up, like you and S., in an age of great terrors, great problems, and a few great hopes; and the bereaved who mourn, as they mourned in their silent neglected thousands twenty-five years ago, for husbands, sons, brothers, lovers, wives, daughters, and friends.

The ranks of the bereaved may be divided into two classes: those who are lamenting their dreams, and those who are mourning their dead. The members of the first category are mostly young. Both young and old belong to the second.

Among the innocent victims of this war, now amounting to millions, none are less guilty than the boys and girls born since 1918. Yet it is they who have to pay, in loss of life, health, hope, and opportunity, the heaviest cost of international breakdown. Like their parents between 1914 and 1918, they emerge from childhood to face exhortations to sacrifice themselves in the interests of a society created by their elders but not their betters. They are ordered to yield up their control of their own lives for reasons, however idealistically presented, which affect only the few who exercise authority. Even at sixteen, their registra-

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tion makes them part of the potential "manpower" or "womanpower" at their government's disposal. Those stereotypes used so frequently by the press — "our troops," "our airmen," "reinforcements," "prisoners," "C.O.s," "casualties," "service women" — conceal a total sum of youthful suffering, bewilderment, and frustration never equalled in history.

Apart from the parents with serving sons and daughters, no one could be more conscious of the heavy heritage handed on to the younger generations than the fathers and mothers whose children have reached school age. When you, my son, were born in 1927, and S. in 1930—that brief half decade in which we seemed to be emerging from the aftermath of one great war without yet perceiving the shadow of the next—I still believed that I had saved both of you from the chaos, interruptions, and losses of a world conflict by having endured those things myself ten years before. Instead, like all your contemporaries, you draw nearer each month to the choice between military service, with its sacrifice of education and career and its threat of death or damage, and a refusal which involves official dishonor, social unpopularity, and the same wasteful frustration. And you need to have evolved, prematurely, a complete philosophy of life before you are qualified to make that choice.

With reasonable luck, you may never have to make it. But others, only a few years your senior, are faced with it now. As the mother* of a grown-up family recently wrote:

"The young men who, through a quarter of a century, have been brought to perfection, young men, white, brown, and yellow, sink in the high seas and are lost, they perish in the desert and the snows, they fall from the skies and are destroyed, and their passing is lighted by the flare of burning homes. The day of total war is nearing its zenith."

Meanwhile a host of young women, who should have married them and borne their children, is again condemned

* Barbara Duncan Harris, in the *Monthly News Sheet* of the Women's International League for January, 1942.

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to childlessness. Today, too, the young women are conscripted themselves. They are urged to put the war machine before the "sacredness" of family life, though this "sacredness" was always the reason given in peace time for withholding from married women the right to continue working in the professions for which they had been trained. No one troubles about two incomes, or five, going into one home when that income is made through war service. Only when it is earned by such creative occupations as teaching and medicine are objections raised. The destructiveness of modern war strikes more fiercely than ever before at the things that mean most to women—children, homes, education, healing.

Even from the young men, neither death nor injury is the only contribution which the warmakers demand. The prospect of prolonged, indefinite tedium saps the mind and spirit as surely as starvation exhausts the body. Today's youth is wasting its best years in suspense and monotony. It waits about. It goes on duty to do nothing of importance for leaden-footed hours. "Not even an alert to liven us up!" a twenty-two-year-old girl Civil Defense worker wrote to me in exasperation after months of inactivity. Sometimes the experience of disintegrating uncertainty starts even before the period of service begins. The attempt, for instance, to combine military training with a university education has not been precisely helpful to either. "Why is it," inquired a contributor to the *Daily Mail*,* that thousands of young men and young women have to be made dispirited and disgruntled waiting for months after they have been told that they may expect their call-up at any moment?"

Yet, comprehensible as these reasons for frustration are, I believe that its real explanation lies deeper in the psychology of youth. I should define it as a vague, uninformed, yet growing skepticism regarding the justification for the war, and an indeterminate yet pervasive doubt whether its alleged objective is really worth the loss of so much that makes life desir-

* F. C. Hooper, *Daily Mail*, February 12, 1942.

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able. Even to the unreflective, the merely negative "destruction of Hitlerism" makes little appeal, while "survival" offers still less. Among the more intelligent I find a profound misgiving whether, even assuming that the Nazi forces could be utterly annihilated, this in itself would "destroy Hitlerism." The fact is slowly being realized that "Hitlerism" is something far deeper, more intractable, and of longer standing than Hitler himself. Many young people now recognize that the Nazis, like the Bolsheviks, are not the cause of the chaos to which our civilization has come, but part of its effects; and that the remedy lies, not in further threats of punishment and repression, but in the promise of a future which holds out some hope to the weary peoples of Central Europe. The young and generous are ready to make such a promise. But their leaders fail to perceive the necessity.

Neither the young men nor the young women do much complaining. Only a few resist the aging politicians who send them out to fight rather than agree to the sacrifice of material benefits which is the basis of all negotiation. Often, in spite of the death-dealing weapons placed in their hands, they show, like companions in misfortune, spontaneous humanity to their "opposite numbers." In January, 1942* I read of an Italian doctor at Halfaya who brought five wounded bomber pilots back to the British lines because he had no medical supplies with which to treat them. In return he was given an abundance of surgical dressings to take to his own men. In August, 1942, a letter received from a stranger, a private serving in the Middle East, referred discreetly but unmistakably to a similar experience with German troops. "Some time ago I wrote to a friend at home about hatred . . . I said I would never agree with the Vansittarts and other older statesmen about the character of Germany as a whole. . . . Not by gathering my own observations, but by hearing the opinions of those who shared this experience with me, has the above been proved right. If col-

* *Daily Mail*, January 8, 1942.

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laboration occurs during battle, how easy will collaboration be after war. If all our forces had had similar experiences, I doubt whether the war would have continued. It proved to me also what I have always thought is essential for peace—a vast interchange of youth, for let youth meet and all hatred and misunderstanding will disappear. . . . I have only one wish, to tell Vansittart & Co. how utterly wrong they are, for I know none of them could ever produce such overwhelming evidence."

One afternoon in the first autumn of the war, I learned that the young of today do not die joyfully for the mistakes made by their predecessors. I had gone to Eton to have tea with a master whom I knew at college, and we were sitting in his room when three boys in khaki came in to say good-bye. There was no jubilation, as there would have been in 1914; not a flicker of excitement nor hint of congratulation. Master and boys alike were inarticulate and sad. Incongruous as the background to that somber acceptance, the scarlet ampelopsis climbing the gray walls and the river sparkling in the autumn sunshine took on an indescribable poignancy. I did not learn where the boys were going, but after they had left the master told me that they were his star pupils of the previous summer.

No doubt you will say that Eton and its inhabitants are typical only of the few. But I have found little evidence of greater enthusiasm in the East End of London. A Bethnal Green settlement worker once told me that in this war no glamorous aureole crowns the young soldiers who come home on leave; their juniors pity rather than envy them. Now and then Etonians and East Enders alike break forth privately into passionate words. I had one such letter from a twenty-three-year-old lieutenant a few months ago.

"I want to try" (he wrote), "to explain the feelings of some of those taking part in this war. The youth of this age began this war mentally at the stage where those engaged in the last war left off; no surges of heroism, we had seen too many without limbs or permanently mad from head wounds, no belief in good versus evil, it is gray versus black, or tolerable

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against the intolerable, and very little hope of there being a bigger, better, and happier world after this war has ended. I know that all this is common knowledge to everyone except those who make speeches. . . . The fever pitch of enthusiasm that 1914 evoked made facing death far more easy, the knowledge of the inevitable incompetence that causes most of the casualties was not present to shake the trust in one's leaders. . . . The general atmosphere has so radically altered, the amount of times one hears that it really does not matter whether I come back alive or not, for things will inevitably be so hellish after the war that it is just as well that I should cease to be, is frightening. . . . At Oxford I had a friend who was extremely intelligent, good-looking, and popular, besides being senior scholar of his year at his college. He was old for his age and thought; he got so hopeless that he took to drink seriously (one bottle of whiskey a day) simply because he was unable to solve the uselessness of life; weak, you may say, but he was not alone. Now there is a war on he is flying and can forget his sorrows in another way, but as to militant nationalism it does not enter into things. . . . I am certain that the generation that *experienced* the last war must get in touch with those who have been in this if any good is to be achieved in the future."

A few weeks later, a letter from another stranger, this time in Egypt, confirmed the observations of the first.

"It seems very hard" (wrote this young soldier), "that there was not a strong enough body either in England or France to demand an expulsion of the reactionaries and the 'old men,' and so save a second generation from this sinister doom. The worst part of this war seems to me the utter lack of hope for the future. If I could feel stimulated—as I understand so many young men and women were in 1914, believing it was a war to end wars and that we were like chivalrous knights of old, ready to give our lives so that others might live in peace and happiness—I feel I might be able to work myself up to a fervor of self-righteous elation which would at least be preferable to this deadening sensation of 'just grinning and bearing it' in order to avoid the fate of Poland and all those other victims. Do you see any guarantee that my generation is not doomed to the same fate as yours and to be thrown to the wolves with no further prospects

for the world than mass starvation, criminal statesmanship, and more wars?"

These letters and many others I could quote make me certain that the rescue of our society, and especially its youth, from the sense of frustration and disillusion now possessing it will never be achieved by further exhortations to damage and destroy—however heroic war propaganda may cause these performances to appear. Young adult human nature is essentially constructive. One reason for the present despondency of boys and girls in the forces, and of those not yet mature enough to join them, is the failure of the government to decide what type of society it wants to see after the war, and its reluctance to guarantee the changes which are necessary if the new is to be better than the old.

It is a common practice now to vilify France and denounce her collaborationists, but, according to a contributor in a recent issue of *Blackfriars*,* she has at least created "a great body of young people whose one aim is service, whose watchword is generosity, and who are ready to make all the sacrifices necessary to help their suffering fellow countrymen." Today these boys and girls who represent the real France are directing traffic, housing and feeding refugees, giving information, carrying luggage, delivering the mail in the place of a defunct bureaucracy. They are the products of a Catholic revival which has helped the Vichy Government to function by creating this fine type of youth at the moment of France's greatest need. Their part in rebuilding France has saved them from the fate of many unhappy young refugees whom total war has cast upon the world. Other children have lost all who were left to care for them before being themselves deprived of a life which began only to end. A few weeks ago I came across this short paragraph,† which was headed "The Unknown Child."

"A baby girl found unconscious in air-raid ruins at Bath

* Blackwell, Oxford; quoted in *The Christian News Letter* for January 21, 1942.

† *Evening Standard*, June 19, 1942.

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died a few hours later. No one knows who she was; no one has claimed her. The Rev. H. K. Hudson, formerly Vicar of Berden, Bishop's Stortford, has suggested that the child should be buried in some ruined church as 'the unknown child victim.' Every possible effort has been made by the authorities to establish the baby's identity, but they have failed. Her coffin bears just a number."

For many young evacuees, the choice has lain between nights of terror and days without kindness. Only a fortunate few, like you and S., have had generous American friends who offered a sanctuary rich in affection. During the years between the wars some of my correspondents, writing to me of their war-time childhood, mentioned dark recollections of tension, of telegrams, of blackened windows, and decreasing rations. But what will the memories of today's children be?—many hounded from country to country, still more wakened by guns and bombs, others starved to the point of death, yet others forcibly severed from beloved families and cherished homes. How can we, your parents, who want to see you confronted, before we depart, with a future at least better than our past, turn these recollections to account? What can we do to ensure that out of them shall spring, not cynicism nor vindictiveness nor pessimism, but the constructive determination to save yet another young generation from your own harsh experience?

However hard your future may be, I believe that it is only by carrying on the struggle to create a lasting peace that you and your contemporaries, both older and younger, will find compensation for your insecurity, your disillusion, and your memories. Whether your contribution is made through art, through letters, through welfare politics, or through day-by-day experiments in creative living, matters very little. What does matter is that we, your predecessors—parents, foster parents, preachers, and teachers—shall make as certain as we can, by the education we give you, that you do grow up to fight against warfare, and not, like yesterday's children, against one another.

8. THEY THAT MOURN

THE mourners of today, though they form a world-wide multitude, are not easily discovered by their would-be comforters. As I wrote you in my second letter, one purpose of modern war propaganda is to conceal personal suffering as effectively as it hides the horror of every war-time "incident." To the popular collective nouns in which individual losses are submerged, the press and the *communiqués* have added a now familiar series of conventional phrases designed to reassure by their studied vagueness.

"Mopping-up operations are proceeding," we are told, "and our troops are cleaning up pockets of enemy resistance." "Some damage was done, but casualties were negligible." "The situation was always under control, and all services worked smoothly."

I once read an article* analyzing the facts so comfortably disguised by the first of these amorphous expressions.

"'Cleaning up pockets of enemy resistance' reminds us of the swift, health-giving action of the surgeon's knife," comments the writer, who by now probably knows the exact stage of an argument at which his companion is going to describe this war as "a surgical operation." "It does not suggest a pitiful group of Italian peasants, exhausted by fever and dysentery, whose only existence is the short, blissful silence between machine-gun and bombing attacks."

In the East End of London, and other raided areas which I knew during the "Blitz," I learned and not infrequently observed what happened to the "negligible casualties" in those well-controlled "situations," and saw the distress of their husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, or children. Let us hope that there are many future writers and artists among the shelterers, wardens, fire fighters, and ambulance drivers, who will one day make real the meaning of this war in human terms. They

* *Peace News*, January 2, 1942.

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alone have power to show us the lost homes, the broken families, the sorrowful wives, the terrified children, who are pawns in the huge political chess game of total war. At present the griefs of these families find expression only in the correspondence of their scattered members.

"My wife and two sons are in Ottawa" (an old acquaintance wrote me the other day from the Middle East). "I, after exploring every possible avenue for a decently paid job, found myself forced to apply for a commission, for the second time adopting a career to which I am about as ill fitted as possible. Army life is definitely unsuited to a bald, bespectacled, suburban family man of 41! . . . Sweat, flies, sand, boredom, make up the days and nights. Meanwhile one's children are passing through the most interesting stages of their development and one is missing it all. Sometimes I feel as if I should never get over this split up of my family."

Once, even in the last war, sorrow was honored as an emotion deserving of consideration. This respect was extended to the mourners of "the other side." Today even that measure of human decency has vanished. Few forms of propaganda have supplied such disquieting evidence of lost standards as our imitation of the savage Russian broadcasts designed to turn the screw of suffering in the hearts of bereaved German women. One leading article in an evening newspaper was entitled, "Mrs. Hess." It was addressed in taunting terms to the woman whose torturing suspense at the time of her husband's strange flight is shared by every wife of a British commando.

If these cruelties are ingredients of *morale*, we are better without it; it becomes too crude a substitute for our former ethical values. We can forgive the Russia of the Revolution, with its totalitarian order built by blood and terror upon a foundation of semi-Asiatic barbarism. But ours has been nominally a Christian civilization for centuries. Though we have never actually practiced Christianity, we have officially accepted the standards of a faith which enjoins us to forgive our enemies not seven times, but seventy times seven.

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Here, as in Germany, they that mourn must today find their own consolation. They will discover it, perhaps, when they are permitted to speak again, in making their pain real to our defective imaginations. Some never find it at all, and take the only means of escape that remains. Not long ago I saw this item, typical of many others, in the evening press.*

"A few days after hearing that her R.A.F. son had been killed, Mrs. Irene Bratley, fifty, was found dead in a chair in front of an electric fire at a flat at Marine Parade, Brighton. At the Brighton inquest today, when a verdict of suicide while the balance of the mind was disturbed was recorded, it was stated that Mrs. Bratley was discovered by police on Monday after the glow of an electric fire had been seen from a bedroom on successive nights. Dr. L. R. Janes, pathologist, said that death was due to poisoning by a barbituric acid derivative. The Coroner, Mr. Charles Webb, said that a note left behind contained the sentence: 'Please bury me as cheaply as possible, and don't waste any tears. I am longing to go'."

The majority, of course, stop short of suicide. They go on living from force of habit, rather than because they see any reason for hope. Recently I received a letter from an unknown reader, this time a girl in her twenties. She wrote to ask for help in publishing the manuscripts of "a very beloved elder brother." He had been a pilot officer who disappeared, with all his crew, on his first flight against German shipping. Heart-broken, she turned for comfort to the man she hoped to marry, but overwork and war strain had warped his mind, and they parted. In desperation she transferred all her hopes to her youngest brother, a gay, handsome boy of nineteen. "He understood, and did his utmost to fill the gaps. He went down with his ship in January and my life has just been wiped out, the three I cared for most in the world gone, and the future just a blank."

Is it surprising that the Cardinal Archbishop of Ireland made a plea to the statesmen of the world for "the poor plain

* *Evening Standard*, February 13, 1942.

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people . . . to whom victory on either side will not mean very much?" Or that Dr. Alfred Salter, M.P., quoting him in the House of Commons, concluded his own speech with another appeal: "Is there to be no end to this torture of millions of human beings? Is there no pity in the whole world?"

More recently, broadcasting on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination as a Bishop, the Pope issued another grave reminder to the organizers of continued war. Behind the war front, he said, arose another huge front, the front of family anguish:

"We should like to address a fatherly warning to the rulers of nations. The family is sacred. It is the cradle of children, and also of the nation, of its force, and its glory. Do not let the family be alienated or diverted from the high purpose assigned to it by God. . . . We think of the separation between husbands and wives, and of the destruction of family life; of famine and economic misery. There are heartbreaking and unending examples of every one of these. This is one of the most terrific and terrible things which has ever happened to mankind; indeed, it is such as to make us fear grave economic and social dangers for the future. While great intelligences were busy trying to build a new social order and people knew that national wealth was one of the fundamental bases of the solution, today this national wealth is being spent by the hundred millions to destroy all that exists."*

We, who cannot join in this work of destruction, must learn, as part of our obligation to a suffering community, what to say to them that mourn. "Passing through the Valley of Weeping," wrote the psalmist, "they make it a place of springs." But perhaps you think that just saying something is not much good. In these noisy, over-exciting days, people are apt to speak of words with contempt. They must have deeds, they say. Nothing matters but "constructive action."

I do not agree with them. The power of words is greater than anyone can calculate. Words have made revolutions

* *The Tablet*, May 23, 1942.

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before today. The use of the right words at the right time can transform the existence of a man or woman from desolation to glory. But you may have to live a whole lifetime before you learn how to choose those words.

It therefore remains true that, for many young and active pacifists, the best outlet for spiritual tension is practical service to the victims of power. Often the tension is released most effectively by work which no one else will undertake because it is so unpleasant or so unpopular. During the air raids many members of Pacifist Service Units did the humblest of necessary jobs in the shelters, washing floors, disinfecting bedclothes, or collecting the dirty scraps left by the shelterers. One unit organized by the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship decided to open, near Charing Cross Station, a refuge for the "down-and-outs" who normally sleep in the parks or on the Embankment, and were not accepted in the ordinary shelters.

These social outcasts had already taken possession of a passage near Charing Cross when they were discovered by some young pacifists working in the crypt shelter beneath St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. The friend who showed me round the now civilized refuge known as the Hungerford Club described its original appearance: he spoke of the fire buckets lit during the cold winter of the "Blitz" in the gloom of the long covered passage; the dirty hands stretched over the glow; the dark, suspicious faces redly illumined. That flash of sinister drama has vanished; order, gaiety, decency have taken its place.

Because the members of this Pacifist Service Unit have known humiliation, suffered as social pariahs, and, in one or two cases, been to prison, their skill in establishing friendly relations with London's vagrants has been quite unusual. The inspirational genius which enabled Canon Sheppard to make the crypt of St. Martin's a refuge for homeless wanderers is at work in the Hungerford Club, but it has a different origin. His natural gift for human understanding has here been created by stark experience of shared degradation.

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In these once dismal but now cheerfully painted vaults, "humiliation with honor" is demonstrated in action. No normal social workers, gifted perhaps with natural kindness but endowed with a subconscious sense of elevation through lack of reciprocal knowledge, could have made the same success of their job as this group of conscientious objectors. Perpetually handicapped by lack of funds, often infested with vermin passed on by their visitors, sometimes bruised and battered by tussles with "drunks" who subsequently return to apologize, these workers of Charing Cross have maintained an unimpaired friendship with their guests and with each other. The drunkards have not ceased drinking nor have the drug addicts escaped from their bondage, but the "regulars" who were once dangerously filthy are now comparatively clean, and the young men who sleep at the Club are as safe from attack as anywhere in London.

"We cannot shelter behind the decision society has passed upon them" (runs the latest report of the Hungerford Club on its "undesirables") "unless we are confident that the verdict of man is upheld in the courts of heaven. Therefore, although these folk may be little credit to the human family, they still belong to the family of God and, in the name of the Great Brotherhood, can press their claims upon all others who own the Common Father."

During the summer of 1942, a young woman pacifist found a way of bringing comfort to another and more temporary class of "undesirables"—the friends and relatives of the Nazi raiders who have died in this country. Passing through the cemetery of a recently "blitzed" town, she came across the graves of three German airmen brought down in the attack.

"They were overgrown with weeds and completely neglected" (she wrote to me). "Remembering the care and devotion with which some friends of mine tend the grave of their own airman son, I couldn't help thinking of those other parents, or perhaps wives, over in Germany, who couldn't pay even that last tribute to those whom they loved, and who, however mistakenly, had given their lives for their country."

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She resolved that she would tend the graves herself, and asked if I knew of any way by which this information could be conveyed to the relatives of the airmen. An attempt to communicate through the Red Cross proved unavailing, but thanks to the initiative of my correspondent the attention of the responsible organization was drawn to these graves, which are now beautifully tended. Sooner or later this news will reach those German families who are mourning the death of their sons in an enemy country. Thus, through the imaginative sympathy of one young woman, another of those personal gestures has been made which create a world-wide fellowship amongst those who suffer, and link the "poor plain people" to one another across the chasm of war.

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IN my fifth letter I suggested that an important function of pacifism in war time is the preservation of certain human and religious values which might otherwise be lost. These values are vital to the making of peace, whatever the circumstances in which the struggle ends. Their abandonment at the end of the last war meant the failure of the peace treaty in spite of an overwhelming Allied victory.

I also emphasized that this undertaking must be carried out humbly and without self-righteousness, since we are all part of a society which has failed, and must bear our proportion of responsibility for that failure. Their forgetfulness of their own share in the present disaster makes some pacifists assume a superior air which exasperates those who do not agree with them. To follow a light which you have seen may compel you to a certain course of action, but this does not in itself make you a better human being. The private lives of pacifists are often difficult just because their public witness makes perpetual nervous and emotional demands. Even the beloved leader, H. R. L. Sheppard, as his biography by R. Ellis Roberts reveals, could not save his household from paying indirectly a heavy part of the price of his faith.

The price must nevertheless be paid. Even under favorable conditions, pacifism is always a discipline of the soul. In time of war it becomes a very stringent discipline, for the majority of its critics deny the spiritual compulsion from which it springs, and attribute it to every type of unworthy motive that ingenuity can invent.

To withstand these critics and maintain a detached judgment in spite of the sense of injustice that they cause and the popular support that they command, is a moral exercise which greatly strengthens the fiber of those who can endure it. Criticism makes it only the more necessary to keep our heads and continually review the events of the war in the largest possible

perspective against their historical background. This perspective becomes increasingly obscured by war propaganda, yet only by seeing it steadily through the fog can we serve the cause of truth. Facing facts as they are to the best of our ability, we must convey the knowledge of them to others by every means at our disposal. Through the shadows of these days we struggle toward the light cast in dark places by love, knowledge, and pity, and so fight to the limits of our power for the better standards against the worse.

My last three letters have shown you how unlimited is the human misery which stakes its claim upon compassion today. I have described how a war begun—at any rate by some—in the genuine belief that it would save the persecuted groups in Central Europe from Nazi tyranny, has resulted in carrying suffering to the people of almost every country on a scale which even the worst negotiations and the least favorable peace would never have approached.*

But suffering, as these letters have tried to explain, may be redemptive if it is accepted without bitterness as a part of experience. Pain, loss, grief, failure, degradation, and oppression can and often do carry an individual to spiritual adulthood more swiftly than the most gratifying encounter with joy. The same cannot be said of the deterioration of moral standards which accompanies war. For this there is no compensation; it produces worse men and women and a more evil society. Much of the work of pacifism in war time involves exposing and fighting this process, and thus trying to prevent the spread of spiritual rot.

The values which I wrote you that we must endeavor to preserve mean an unswerving allegiance to Christian standards of charity, magnanimity, compassion, and truth. These weapons of the spirit offer a constant challenge to the easy war-time descent into animosities which damage the hater far more than the hated. They combat the vengeance which disguises itself

* Cf. Note on p. 12.

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as "retribution." They resist the ruthlessness which inflicts suffering without compunction upon the helpless and weak. They unmask the propaganda which denies, distorts, and suppresses facts. There is no end to the moral damage wrought by war-time passions. Many waters, it is said, cannot quench love, but it perishes quickly in the miasma of suspicion and fear. All sense of human claims vanishes, as my second letter showed you, in a pitiless, impersonal collectivity. Soon the very power to feel becomes itself impaired. The death of men's sensibilities is one of the earliest and most disastrous casualties in war.

Between 1914 and 1918 I learned from my work in military hospitals the numbing effect of perpetual contact with suffering. During the opening days I felt sick at the sight of a raw wound, and the first death that I witnessed haunted my mind for weeks. Before a year had passed the wounds to be dressed represented merely so many hours of routine, and I would calculate whether a mortally wounded patient would die in time to give me my weekly half day off duty. Yet I am not, I think, brutal or unimaginative. The continued experience of tragedy gradually atrophies the senses, and creates a defense mechanism of callousness without which the normally sensitive person could not endure.

With the less than normally sensitive, this process soon degenerates into barbarity. With all of us, actions once unimaginable come to be accepted as normal, or, at worst, unavoidable. "So Lubeck was bombed," commented an editorial in the *Daily Herald*,* formerly a newspaper which defended the world's workers against the will of the privileged few. "In the course of the bombing humble homes were devastated, innocent civilians killed. *But that cannot be helped.*"

At a recent conference, Lord Ponsonby found the comprehensive word which describes the external symptom of our deadly disease. "Acquiescence: that is the evil." And acquiescence takes a long step down a slippery slope, for the next

* April 4, 1942. (Italics mine.)

stage after the loss of compassion is the infliction of cruelty—always justified on the ground that the enemy is worse. It can hardly be overemphasized that the endurance of pain, however bitter and unprovoked, never rots our moral fiber with one-tenth of the speed that follows its infliction. Finally comes the deliberate cultivation, by hitherto civilized persons, of the viler qualities which are latent in us all, and the considered disparagement of their opposites. The finest human attributes are dismissed as valueless in terms of contempt, which classify magnanimity as "effete" and describe a belief in the power of forgiveness as "moral acrobatics."

In 1939 the democracies opposing Hitler accepted as their standard of war-time conduct the regulations of international law, which is based upon the belief—fully justified by the familiar psychological process described in the previous paragraphs—that it is better to suffer disadvantage in war than to descend to the lower levels of barbarity. By common consent such barbarity included the slaughter of civilians by bombing or starvation, and the avoidable destruction of humanity's cultural heritage. In 1940 a group of pacifist clergy went on a deputation to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. Part of their purpose was to inquire at what point the Church would rather see the war lost than won by methods inconsistent with Christianity. The Archbishops replied that this point would be reached if the bombing of open towns were undertaken, not as a reprisal, but as part of our national policy; and also if we deliberately violated the neutrality of another nation.*

After three years of war, the comparatively civilized position adopted by both Church and state has degenerated into one in which government spokesmen brought up as Christians describe the sending of mercy ships through the blockade to

* See "An Agreed Report on a Deputation of Pacifist Clergy to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Lambeth Palace, Tuesday, June 11, 1940," published by the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, 1 Adelaide Street, London, W.C. 2. This report was submitted to the Archbishops and was published with their assent.

feed the starving children of Europe, as "false humanity"; and once kindly listeners to the radio revel in the massacre of civilians by the thousand in Rostock or Cologne. The "plastering" of a selected area has replaced the "precision bombing" of military objectives, and Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal addresses an extraordinary admonition to the readers of Sunday newspapers: "Let it not be imagined that the effects of this bombing are confined to the civilian population."* British troops have occupied Iceland, Iran, and Madagascar. Yet the point at which the Church was to have found the war intolerable for Christians has not yet arrived.

In a letter to the press during 1941, Professor Gilbert Murray and Mr. George Bernard Shaw pointed out that reprisal bombing is not only morally indefensible but militarily useless, since even if raids could be maintained nightly, and each raid killed 1,000 persons, it would take over a century to exterminate us, and a century and half to exterminate the Germans. The Military Correspondent of *The Times* has calculated that in order to bomb Germany as intensively as undefeated Malta was bombed during three weeks of 1942, we should require over four million bombers.† The Church does not support these critics even for reasons of common sense. Lesser mortals protest against the mass bombing of German cities on the ground that we are now guilty of the very type of conduct for which our government went to war against Germany. An editorial in the *Daily Herald* describes these objectors as "woolly-headed"—although, if they deserve this term, it is equally applicable to Hugo Grotius and the other founders of international law. But the Church is still silent.

"We have no apologies to make for devastating Lubeck," the B.B.C. assures the Continent after the destruction of an old and lovely city which contained many irreplaceable treasures of medieval culture.‡ "Blast and bomb, attack and at-

* *Sunday Express*, August 16, 1942.

† *Evening Standard*, June 24, 1942.

‡ *Daily Mail*, April 6, 1942.

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tack," echoes the press,* "until there is nothing left where once men lived and worked. Do the job thoroughly. No sentimentality, no half measures." Even *The Times* reports with apparent satisfaction: "It is estimated that already not fewer than 1,000,000 persons throughout the Reich are homeless in consequence of R.A.F. raids. . . . The official German news agency says that Mainz Cathedral was among the historical monuments burned down after the two successive air raids on the town."†

On July 28, 1942, Air Marshal Harris, the Chief of Bomber Command, broadcast to Germany a "message" singularly un-British in its boastfulness:

"We are going to scourge the Third Reich from end to end. . . . We are bombing Germany, city by city, and ever more terribly in order to make it impossible for you to go on with the war. This is our object. We shall pursue it remorselessly. . . . Already one thousand bombers go to one town, like Cologne, and destroy a third of it in an hour's bombing. . . . No part of the Reich is safe. In Cologne, in the Ruhr, at Rostock, Lubeck, or Emden, you may think that already our bombing amounts to something. But we do not think so. As our own production of bombers comes to a flood and as American production doubles and then redoubles, all that has happened to you so far will seem very little. . . ."

The following Sunday, a commentary by John Gordon, editor of the *Sunday Express*, endorsed both these words and these methods. "Germany," he wrote, "the originator of war by air terror, is now finding that terror recoiling upon herself with an intensity that even Hitler in his most sadistic dreams never thought possible." The longer you think over this sentence, the more astonishing its implications become. The most relevant comment is a question: "Who is the sadist now?"

Would any impartial neutral regard these utterances as differing in any way from the hysterical threats of Dr. Goebbels? Can any rational person consider the hopeless and terrible

* *Sunday Express*, April 20, 1942.

† *The Times*, August 15, 1942.

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prospect envisaged by Air Marshal Harris and Mr. Gordon as offering to the German people an incentive to abandon their only leaders, however deeply they may dislike them? But the Church, like the B.B.C., has no apologies to make. The Christian "sentimentality" which it has taught for centuries is not applicable to total war. It is content to let its standards slide downhill with those of the government and people over whom it claims the moral leadership.

Hatred is now much more than the moral laxity which accompanies warfare; it has become a policy. This stage began when the authors of the Atlantic Charter, visualizing an agreeable Never-Never Land in which the wishes of British and American statesmen would be carried out against the perfect background of a political vacuum, proposed in Point Eight to cure "aggression" by allocating another dose of humiliation to the nation whose reaction against the humiliations of the last war produced the present catastrophe. By the official adoption of "retribution" as a major war aim, this policy has been continued. It has reached its peak in the campaign of deliberate hatred which seems likely to confer an inglorious immortality upon the name of Lord Vansittart. This campaign is itself an example of inverted Nazism, a form of moral intemperance which is better guaranteed than any movement now in progress to keep Germany implacably united behind Hitler. Such policies would never have attained their present dimensions had the distinction, so carefully observed by editors and politicians in the early days of the war, between the Nazi leaders and the German people been resolutely maintained. Joseph Stalin has usually been careful to avoid the grave psychological error which identifies the two.

The Vansittart movement ignores facts as crudely as it abjures benevolence. Lord Vansittart's pamphlet, *Black Record*, sacrifices objective historical accuracy with a consistency worthy of a nobler purpose than the desire to inflict retaliation upon a people amongst whom the author was unhappy in his school-

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days. The size of his following would have been impossible three years ago. It exists today because, in the realm of truth as in the field of charity, the British nation has passed from respect through indifference to repudiation.

In war the denial of truth begins earlier than the betrayal of pity, for truth is less perceptible than charity and its abuse is therefore harder to detect. From minor omissions and misrepresentations, press and radio pass to major suppressions and exaggerations, and thence to false news and deliberate inventions.

In April, 1942, the Ministry of Information issued a picture showing a Russian supporting the limp body of a woman with her arms outstretched. At their feet lies the corpse of a young man. The original title under this picture was as follows: "German atrocities in Russia. Parents find the body of their murdered son in Kerch." But when it appeared in the *Sunday Pictorial* it was "improved" by some colorful embroidery:

"'It's my son. . . .' This is a poignant picture. The Germans, driven from Kerch, murdered many of the Russian inhabitants in cold blood before they left. Those Russians who escaped from Kerch return to find their relatives. This mother has searched among the bodies of the slain, dreading to see a well-loved face upturned in death. Her worst fears are realized. She finds her son slain and, in an abandonment of grief, flings wide her arms and cries her anguish aloud."

Another newspaper, *The People*, in publishing this picture, departed from the Ministry of Information "line," embroidered or plain, for a thesis of its own: "The Tragedy that is Russia. A Russian father raises the murdered body of his daughter in Kerch."

A final comment on the picture's adventures appeared in *Truth*:*

"It is this kind of reckless propaganda which makes popular journalism stink in the nostrils of honest men and lays British honor at the mercy of Herr Goebbels. There is surely enough evidence of the horrors of war as Germany and

* April 10, 1942 (quoted in *Peace News*, May 29, 1942).

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Japan conduct it without these imaginative excursions into forced melodrama. For all we know, the picture may actually be that of an episode in the Russo-Finnish or any other campaign."

This picture is only one example of the war-time abuses of truth. There are countless others, such as the suppression of our own reverses and the proclamation of the enemy's; the presentation of his conduct as incessantly devilish, and our own as perpetually noble; the "spotlighting" of one incident in a *communiqué* so that the whole picture is out of perspective; the selection, on Vansittart lines, of certain aspects of a nation's history while omitting the rest. It is the peculiarities of human psychology which make atrocity stories so potent and so dishonest a weapon. Most people tend to be supersensitive to certain types of "atrocity," and to remain singularly impervious to others. This enables the press and the B.B.C. to present our own brutal deeds with triumphant complacency, while displaying fervent moral indignation over the cruelties of the enemy and carefully omitting any information which might mitigate or explain them.

For weeks during the spring of 1942 we were urged to "remember Hong Kong," for if atrocities did not exist in war, it would be necessary for governments to invent them. A corrective to the stories of Hong Kong atrocities appeared on April 30, 1942, in a dispatch from Montreal to the *Evening Standard*: "First letter from Hong Kong prisoners since the Colony's fall are being received by joyful families and bring the heartening word: 'We are being treated well.' . . . The letters indicate that the percentage of wounded among those writing is low. Officers report that they are being paid and allowed sports, including volleyball, ping-pong and softball." Five hundred letters were mailed from Canadian soldiers. Shortly afterwards, an acquaintance of mine arrived home from Singapore. She had lost her home and had left her husband in Japanese hands, but her mind remained detached and unembittered. The Japanese, she told me, had suffered severely

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at the hands of our Gurkha regiments, whose cruel instincts the British had not restrained. This fact, if true, does not undo or excuse the Japanese brutalities, but it places them in quite a different perspective.

There is, of course, no reason—apart from the liability of human beings to divide their minds into watertight compartments—why the Japanese excesses in the Far East should be labelled "atrocities," while the bombing of civilians, and the starvation (whether by pillage or by callous acquiescence) of children in Greece and Belgium, should masquerade under more dignified names. Any act of cruelty against the helpless and defenseless is properly called an atrocity.

The persons most readily moved to vindictiveness by excited stories of brutality are usually noncombatants, particularly the safest, the most comfortable, and the least occupied. During the spring of 1941, when a Gallup Poll was taken in England on the subject of reprisal bombing, the largest demand for reprisals (76 per cent of the population) came from Cumberland, Westmorland, and the North Riding. In Inner London, which had suffered severely, the supporters of reprisals were only 45 per cent.* Their bitterest advocate, in my own experience, was a middle-aged woman living securely in a private hotel at Shrewsbury. Those who fight and those who suffer have neither time nor energy for hatred. They experience in their own flesh and nerves the pain of the enemy, while every new attempt to damage him recoils upon themselves. The rest make the psychological mistake of seeking to destroy the external "foe" who disturbs their peace, instead of combating within their own souls those evil emotions which lead to more and more wars and the moral decline that follows them.

How, you may ask, can a small, unpopular, and restricted minority do anything to arrest the spiritual descent of a nation? Its voice is weak; its deeds are condemned or disregarded; its limited writings are criticized and controlled. When there is a

* *News Chronicle*, May 2, 1942.

shortage of the very commodity from which books, the vehicles of opinion, are produced, it is naturally allotted to those subjects which command the maximum support.

Our powers, it is true, are circumscribed, but the Scriptures themselves have urged us not to despise "the day of small things." The duty of protest alone requires constant alertness. But protest, though it may demand more courage than any other kind of witness, remains essentially negative. Charity, not protest, is the chief weapon of good against evil, of peace against war. But charity today is officially regarded as one of those inconvenient virtues which must be put into cold storage until the war is over. To work for a new order based upon love means taking many risks in a world which does not yet accept its authority.

I have written you of some practical expedients: of the campaign for bringing food relief to the starving peoples of Europe; of the organization of vigilance over such ugly growths as "Vansittartism" and indiscriminate bombing; of the service performed by a group of young men to the outcasts of society whose isolation they share. But these measures depend for their success upon the constant presentation of the war in its widest perspective by the makers of opinion—teachers, preachers, writers, and speakers. On them we rely for surveys of accurate facts, especially those which explain the characteristics of our enemies, and show how the emergence of aggressive minorities in Germany, Italy, and Japan is bound up with the course of previous history. Unless the people of this country have an elementary idea of that perspective before the war ends, and realize that the oppressors, as well as the oppressed, stand in need of mercy, we shall prove as unfit for whatever share we may have in the making of peace as we proved in 1918.

If the scholars and students within the pacifist movement help even a few to understand that Hitlerism is not the cause of this conflict but the result of grave historical errors, they will have begun that process of enlightenment which alone can

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arrest the present spiritual decline of the civilized world. The vicious circle of recurrent war will be broken for the first time when one side forgoes its "right" to demand retribution, and instead offers hope, comfort, support. Whenever generosity has been attempted in politics, it has always paid by disarming the enemy. British chivalry to the conquered French in Canada and the defeated Boers in South Africa brought its own reward. The Rush-Bagot agreement, which established the undefended frontier between Canada and the United States in 1818 after a long period of mutual antagonism, gave two nations a century of security and saved them the wasteful expenditure of millions of dollars. The reconciliation between Greece and Turkey, brought about after the last war by the League of Nations, meant that in this war the first people to help the starving Greeks were the Turks. Once the *will* to magnanimity exists, such administrative measures as the collection and distribution of food, and the transfer of refugees and minority populations, are matters of reciprocal organization within the capacity of experts.

There will be much disillusionment after this war, and not only in Germany and Japan. Whatever Britain brings out of the struggle, it cannot be the old unchallenged supremacy, the rule of the "pukka sahib" over the black, brown, and yellow races whom he despised without realizing, in his complacent blindness, that beneath the silence of their servitude they equally despised him. When fighting ceases the exhausted peoples—roused from their nightmare, appalled by their own actions, filled with revulsion and remorse—will not be healed by attempts to track down criminals, exact punishment, and impose retribution. They will be restored to health only by the patience, the practical sense, and the forgiving wisdom of those who have learned to withhold judgment except when they apply it to themselves.

That will be the moment in which the persecuted, repressed, and ostracized minorities from many countries, who have suf-

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ferred humiliation in the name of human dignity, will speak and be heard. They can afford to wait and prepare for that time. If today their power is no greater than the power of a small leaven, they are none the less contributing to that supreme spiritual effort which alone can save the new generation from another vindictive peace and a Third World War.

10. THE SHAPE OF THE FUTURE

TODAY, wherever we go, we hear speculations concerning the future. In a favorite book of my youth, *The Story of an African Farm*, Olive Schreiner, describing the death of her heroine, wrote: "There is a veil of terrible mist over the face of the Hereafter." The mist which obscures the period immediately before us here and now is hardly less impenetrable. Even the present is dark and confused. The past alone remains clear to those who can interpret it. Does it tell us anything about this age of chaos in which we are living? Can it give us even a pointer toward the shape of the future?

You will remember how, in the third of these letters, I mentioned the nationalism of Britain and other European countries which began about the time of the Renaissance. We live today in a revolutionary epoch because we are reaching the end of that age of the nation-state, and have not yet evolved the political and economic structure which is to replace it. After the last war—which was really the first stage of this one—an attempt to create it was made in the Covenant of the League of Nations. That experiment failed because the moral standards of European statesmen were not equal to the machinery at their disposal. The bold, imaginative generosity which this country was given so clear an opportunity to exercise required a new type of courage and wisdom which our rulers did not possess.

Nor were they capable of the narrow but effective variety of courage which enabled us to build and hold our Empire despite the vices native to imperialism. Their policy was one of weak provocation, which worked neither for war nor for peace. They kept the vices but let the courage go. The birth pangs of the new era, which might have been less painful, have therefore taken the acute form of the present war. This is nothing less than a struggle between the liberal democratic ideals of the French Revolution (which Britain, incidentally,

opposed), and the counterrevolution symbolized by Hitler and the Nazis.

This counterrevolution, being reactionary, uses reactionary weapons: the weapons of war and tyranny. It cannot be permanently conquered by its own weapons, for, believing in them, it will always handle them better than those who take to them reluctantly. The democracies should never have attempted to oppose it by copying its methods. The only effective way of fighting it is by mental and spiritual weapons, opposing it from without, acting as a leaven which undermines it from within. The real match for Hitler today is Gandhi. Gandhi's methods, being also revolutionary but not reactionary, would finally defeat aggression, however temporarily apparent the victory of militarism might be. But our governmental clique has neither the courage nor the imagination to let him apply them even in his own country, whose liberation from imperialism has become the acid test of British intentions in this war.

If you want to find an age of history comparable to our own for disturbance and disaster, turn back to the fall of the Roman Empire. When the Goths sacked Rome in A.D. 410, the men of those days believed that the light of civilization had been extinguished. Their mood must have been similar to that of Sir Edward Grey, who, too prophetically, saw the lamps going out all over Europe in August, 1914. But it was just at the time of Rome's eclipse, as a contributor to *The Friend* has reminded us, that Saint Augustine began to set down his vision of a City of God which would outlast all earthly empires.

Augustine could not know that the fall of Rome would be followed by an age of barbarism; and that in its turn by an age of feudalism; and feudalism by an epoch of industrialism, of which the breakdown would lead to the modern totalitarian state. But he could, and did, achieve two things. He could analyze the causes of the downfall of Rome; and he could describe and assess those eternal values upon which

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life would build itself anew when the cataclysm was past.

We can follow his example today by asking ourselves three questions, and trying to answer them. *First*, what were the deep underlying causes of the two World Wars, as distinct from those more immediate causes which historians call "occasions?" *Second*, how can we rediscover the abiding values in the midst of catastrophe? *Third*, how far can we begin, however humbly, to order our lives by these values in such a fashion that, whatever may be the shape of the future, we can influence it for the better and thus help to divert the course of history into new channels? To be sure of the things that matter, to distinguish between the temporal and the eternal—that is the first of all duties for peacemakers today.

In my third letter I touched upon the major causes of this war in trying to show you how the history of modern Germany had tended to put her most aggressive minorities into power. Let us summarize them again.

First, chronologically, came the break-up of the unity of Christendom by the Reformation, which set out to remedy the shortcomings of the medieval Church, but in the process created a number of state churches which substituted the religion of nationalism for the religion of Christ. This development was itself part of the second underlying cause—the rise of the nation-states whose leaders, in their different fashions, preached and practiced the doctrine of "Reason of State." According to this theory, the collective state possessed a god-head of its own and became a law unto itself. Hence the political world has been rent by mutually incompatible conceptions of national sovereignty, and the economic world by a chaotic scramble to control the earth's resources.

The earliest nations to be united as states developed an urge for empire building after the voyages of the Great Discoverers had revealed the existence of rich new territories ripe for exploitation, but Germany and Italy came late into the race because of their delayed unification. Like Japan, they

found themselves "Have Not" Powers, which could increase their territories and markets only by means of aggressive military programs. These programs have not unnaturally been carried out by buccaneers and paranoiacs who climbed to leadership by taking advantage of their maladjusted communities. Unlike the smaller and less ambitious countries, these so-called "Great Powers" added to their economic needs a biological impulse, arising from the pressure of national populations which desired to expand within the confines of their own "state," or, like Japan, to find space and economic opportunity inside some other country with a higher standard of living.

At the beginning of this war, Britain and France between them owned more than sixteen million square miles of the earth's surface, excluding the mandated territories lost by Germany after the Treaty of Versailles. In April, 1940, two months before the fall of France, I found myself in Paris on my way home, via Lisbon, from the United States. Everywhere I saw, on the walls of offices, shops, and railway stations, large maps of the world in which French and British territories were colored red. Beneath these maps ran the caption: "We shall win because we are the strongest." From American Friends who left France more recently, I have learned that the remnants of the maps can still be distinguished beneath Nazi notices on the walls of Paris—a forlorn commentary on the fact that great possessions are not a source of security, but of the envy, hatred, and fear which lead nations into war.

The third cause of the two World Wars has been the failure of the capitalist system to give security and a decent life to the common citizen. Its emphasis was placed upon private profit making; the few pursued material gain at the expense of the many, until the state itself was called upon to support the vested interests of the profiteers. This trend has been exaggerated by the technological processes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with their consequence in mass unemploy-

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ment and their destruction of human personality by mechanization. It was large-scale unemployment, you may remember, which Hitler was elected to remedy. He accomplished this first by eliminating certain classes, such as Jews, women, and Social Democrats, from the labor market altogether; and secondly by building a great military machine. War always offers the easiest apparent solution for unemployment. Actually, it is only a ruinous postponement, which sacrifices great wealth and vast populations to the wheels of Juggernaut.

This machine, with the terrible capacity for devastation which human inventiveness has given it, brings us to the fourth of our basic causes of war. The swift impetus of modern scientific development might have been used to free the lives of all men from want, loneliness, and insecurity. Instead, it has outpaced their moral ability to control its direction, which is now almost entirely destructive. The desire for power is today strangely allied with a universal impulse toward death. Deep in human nature there seems to live a perversity which is wholly evil, since it is contrary both to man's material interests and his finer aspirations. It was as though Lucifer, when he fell from heaven, found the means to insinuate a drop of poison into each of the human souls which God has made throughout His ages of Creation. Man's real war is not against his fellow man, but against that drop of poison in himself. One purpose of the new era struggling so frantically into life must be to find and isolate this elusive poison, as a germ has to be isolated before the disease which it causes can be cured.

To divert the course of history would mean a reversal of the four major trends which, for all their potentiality for good, have brought such evil results. The restoration of religious unity through the revitalization of the Christian churches; the substitution of an international authority for national sovereignty and competitive imperialism; the change from capitalism to socialism, already visible in the war-time transformation of industry from private ownership to state control;

the development of man's moral nature above the level of his scientific inventiveness; these must be the long-range objectives of any society which hopes for permanence. Chronologically, the last should come first, lest the human race destroy itself before it can turn its attention to the other three.

The history of the past four centuries, sharply mirrored in the story of the last twenty years, has proved that the practice of Christianity and the preservation of nationalism are incompatible. One or the other must go. The protection of national cultures has great value, but to preserve the temporal power of the nation-state is fatal to any Kingdom which is not of this world. Those who believe the dominant state to be more important than a Christian society should put all their energies into defending it; but others who accept the validity of the Gospel cannot defend the state when to maintain it means the sacrifice of the faith by which they live. For them this war is the inevitable Nemesis which has followed the errors made by Allied statesmen after the last. If these errors had not produced their Day of Judgment, the working of a moral law in history would be less clearly demonstrated and Christian promises less abundantly fulfilled. Never has it seemed so incontestable that different results can be obtained only by a full acceptance of Christ's teaching and a sincere attempt to build the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The sacrifices of power and prestige which that Kingdom demands must be faced and fulfilled before the race of men can count on survival.

"It is as natural" (writes a New Zealand clergyman), "for the world to be at war today as it is for typhoid germs to breed in open drains and for frogs to breed in stagnant pools. . . . It is the chastisement of men upon men for the flagrant disregard and criminal distortion of Divine Truth."*

Yet the same men can construct, if they desire, a new international organization in which the worst evils of the state will disappear; they can control those vested interests which take

* The Rev. C. W. Chandler, in the *Auckland Star*, January 31, 1942.

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so much more out of society than they ever put into it; they can initiate an age of science in which the chief object of study and experiment will no longer be military destruction, but the vast unexplored continent of the human mind where the roots of war lie. These voyages of psychological discovery will perhaps be part of a new education, directed toward producing a finer type of being both physically and morally. The problem is one of creating a spiritual authority strong enough to discipline mental capacity, which has outrun the power of the soul.

At present these high achievements are objectives only. There will be no historical vacuum in which their pursuit can take place unimpeded by the contrary pressure of circumstances. Even their preparation cannot begin without some attempt to visualize alternative situations and the type of action which these will compel. The character of the future, and the work of those who endeavor to foresee it, must be determined by one of three possible outcomes of the war: an Allied defeat, an Allied victory, or a negotiated peace following a stalemate or a revival of sanity.

You probably have observed that the larger our catastrophes, the louder become the prophecies of "ultimate victory." As Nathaniel Gubbins, the *Sunday Express* humorist, remarked in a "Party Conversation,"* "The worse the news is, the more we talk about what we are going to do with Germany after the war." Far more reassuring than this universal variant on whistling to keep up our courage are some facts which recently appeared in *Fellowship*.† The article in question, "You Cannot Kill the Spirit," was written by Leonard S. Kenworthy, Head of the Social Studies Department of the Friends Central School at Overbrook, Pennsylvania, who directed the Quaker Center in Berlin from June, 1940, to June, 1941. Mr. Kenworthy describes the persistence of religion in Germany despite the

* *Sunday Express*, July 5, 1942.

† June, 1942.

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Nazis, and attaches especial importance to the small groups all over the country who come together for spiritual fellowship. He writes:

"They are not political, they are religious cells. In many respects they resemble the small communities of first-century Christians. They read and pray together. They discuss their personal problems with each other. They are extremely important to the future of Christianity in Central Europe."

Here is a prescription for the revival of religion more reliable than our long-pursued but elusive victory. It offers us a tolerable way of life even if we never catch up with the political and military triumph of which our leaders still feel so certain. In Germany itself the Nazis have been unable to destroy the spirit. The present methods of the German Christians might well be our only defense against the dread future suggested by Mr. Churchill in a speech made on November 11, 1938: "I have always said that, if Great Britain were defeated in war, I hoped we should find a Hitler to lead us back to our rightful position among nations."*

Dark as such a prospect appears, many responsible leaders of opinion are coming to realize that "ultimate victory" may present us with problems at least as appalling. One of the best recent summaries of its probable consequences was contributed by the Bishop of Chichester to the *Christian News-Letter*.† Describing a recent visit to Sweden, the Bishop remarks how "strangely isolated" England now is from most European countries. Newly enlightened with regard to Europe from the angle of the peoples concerned, the Bishop inquires what will happen in the political vacuum created by the downfall of Hitlerism:

"When the crash comes—*What next?* . . . Even before food can be distributed, order is indispensable. With the collapse of the Nazi régime there is the immediate danger of civil war all over Germany, in which the two million men and women from the Occupied Countries now doing forced

* See also his book, *Great Contemporaries*.

† June 24, 1942.

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labor as slaves may have something to say. . . . Once the news reaches Norway, Holland, Belgium, Moravia, Yugoslavia, that Hitler and all his men have fallen—*What then?* Just because the provocations have been so great we have to beware of a different kind of bloodshed on a terrible scale. . . . The whole situation is big with peril."

In the light of the possibility here suggested that "the last state of Europe may be worse than the first," what rational person can regard "victory" as something to be cheerfully acclaimed and pictured in glowing colors, however long its achievement may take? Modern civilization, with its large populations which have to be fed and its crowded industrial cities where epidemics spread like forest fires, cannot afford universal war. The cost in human suffering is too great, the breakdown of the machinery of living too complete. Until the present conflict ends, our work for the diversion of history into new channels can be no more than a preliminary looking forward, an uncertain preparation.

Hence the most practical move we can make is to press for the ending of the war by an armistice, a prolonged conference, and a negotiated peace. "There is no way of ending sin except persuading sinners to leave it off," writes Walter Walsh in *Jesus; War or Peace?* There is no way of ending war except by urging those who are fighting to give it up, and try a better method of settling their dispute. Even a pause might recall how little connection exists between its long-ago "occasions," and those fundamental causes which war always aggravates and can never remove.

Meanwhile, we have to confront and try to reduce our own share of responsibility for humanity's failure. What really underlies the sorry story of four centuries, the deeper causes of revolutionary war traced from the Reformation to the present day? Is not the same tale of greed, ambition, fear, and vindictiveness to be found in our own lives and our relations with our neighbors? The acquisitiveness exposed by rationing, the widespread hoarding of scarce commodities, the envy of a

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neighbor's house, the secret joy in an acquaintance's downfall: are they not evidence of the same self-interest which when enlarged becomes capitalism, imperialism, and competitive nationalism? We shall make the shape of the future no better than the ugly shape of the past unless we learn to give more than lip service to the Christian virtues which most of us extol. The failure has not lain in the political machinery at the disposal of the age, but in those who misused or ignored it. "We needs must love the highest when we see it," wrote Tennyson; yet man, offered the highest, has deliberately permitted his lower nature to occupy the driver's seat.

But not always. Most of our everyday social rules are based upon the abundantly justified assumption of decency, kindness, and common sense in the mass of human beings. The daily newspapers are filled with evidence that man's instinct is to save life, not to destroy it. Thus, the *Daily Herald* for August 24, 1942, contained a striking description, by Hannan Swaffer, of the rescue of a child evacuee who had fallen down a mountain crevice in land that was in danger of subsidence, after seventeen men and boys had struggled unceasingly to reach her for fifteen hours. Our traffic laws rest on the supposition that travelers will respect one another's safety, and refrain from running somebody down the moment that they take to the road. Our postal system is founded on the well-established belief that the great majority of mankind can be trusted with other people's possessions. When ordinary men and women from different nations get together for some international purpose, they do not instinctively dislike one another. They begin to hate only when war-making politicians inflame their emotions with propaganda, and their rulers, corrupted by power, urge them to deeds of violence. Search through the private correspondence of friends, or the small items on the inner pages of obscure magazines, and even now you will discover numerous examples of kindness on the battlefield, in prison, in hospital, or internment camp. The best hope for the future

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lies in the thousand similar instances of human cooperation that we shall find when the warring governments lift the veil of silence through which only stories of cruelty and hatred are permitted to emerge.

Some day peace will return, and with it, perhaps, a measure of sanity. Man, though foolish, lethargic, and corruptible, has nevertheless an undying capacity for spiritual resurrection; his impulse toward death is balanced by an indestructible principle of life. In that hour of awakening, men and women will examine, realistically and with horror, the consequences of this madness of destruction which their leaders began and which they accepted; and will turn, as they turned once before, to the few who kept their heads and provided a nucleus of reason in a world of confusion.

When the pacifist minority is no longer penalized by the wielders of power, it may well be asked to consider how the common peoples of Britain and Germany, purged by suffering, may find a way of life together, freed from the menace of their privileged classes to their mutual interests. Perhaps we shall help our ex-enemies to acknowledge their acquiescence in evil by admitting our own; for we in this country have also a confession to make. We too have propounded, in our colonial territories and above all in India, an intolerable theory of racial superiority; and if we did not seek to "dominate the world," it was because, in markets and on trade routes, we were supreme already. We, the British people, consented to the dividing of Europe in our own interests, instead of uniting it for humanity's welfare. We allowed our leaders to scheme for power, instead of creating an international society based on confidence and friendship. For our own lack of vision, the common peoples of the world have paid. Perhaps the weary days spent in food queues and the sleepless nights passed in shelters will acquire a retrospective value from the mutual sympathy felt by the men and women of many nations who have endured both; and, understanding that our

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fears, our hopes, and our affections are the same, we shall turn to one another for much-needed cooperation in rebuilding the beauty which has been destroyed.

That work of reconstruction will demand every gift which can be contributed to the common weal by all the races of men: the black, the brown, the yellow, the white, "whose prayers go up to one God under different names." Let us therefore seek to end the unnecessary handicaps which have hitherto prevented the full realization of such gifts: the race and class prejudice that sets artificial barriers to the progress of millions; the frustration of women's abilities by tradition and self-interest; the tyranny which age still exercises over youth. The mobilization of all the capacity available on earth will not be too great for the restoration of order to the chaos which this conflict will leave behind it, nor for the solution of the human problems upon which the shape of the future depends.

EPILOGUE

MY DEAR SON,—Ten letters and a hundred pages have not, after all, been sufficient for the statement of faith that I meant to give you. Perhaps a thousand pages would still not be enough. Or perhaps everything I wanted to say is summed up in two quotations which I have discovered in the last few days.

One comes from the broadcast of a Canadian historian* who spoke to the British people from London in the winter of 1941. These were his words:

"We have watched the plain, ordinary men and women of Britain forget the grievances that make men impatient in the griefs that make them patient. . . . We have both been purged by great pities and many mercies. The only race we wish to see triumphant on earth is the human race."

The other I found in the weekly newsletter published by Dr. Josiah Oldham.† He writes:

"The secret of the power of Christianity is that it does not shrink from the abyss. . . . We are made aware in hours of defeat that life has dimensions of which we too easily lose sight when everything is going well."

Here, at any rate, is my own summary of all that I have tried to say to you in the past few weeks.

I believe that men cannot fully exercise compassion until they have experienced humiliation.

I believe that, before they can help the pariahs and felons of society, they must stand beside them in the dock and the prison.

Just as the fight for personal self-conquest takes place in each new generation, so in every epoch has been waged the struggle to eliminate war. But that conflict has now reached a point at which man must overcome this worst of his enemies or himself be annihilated.

* Leonard W. Brockington, on December 22, 1941.

† *Christian News-Letter*, July 15, 1942.

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War begins first in the human soul. When a man has learned how to wrest honor from humiliation, his mastery of his own soul has begun, and by just that much he has brought the war against war nearer to victory. He no longer looks to the men on the heights to supply him with evidence that God exists. Instead, he himself, from the depths, becomes part of that evidence. He has proved that power itself is powerless against the authority of love.

That you and I will each leave some such evidence behind us, is the perpetual hope of

YOUR MOTHER.











